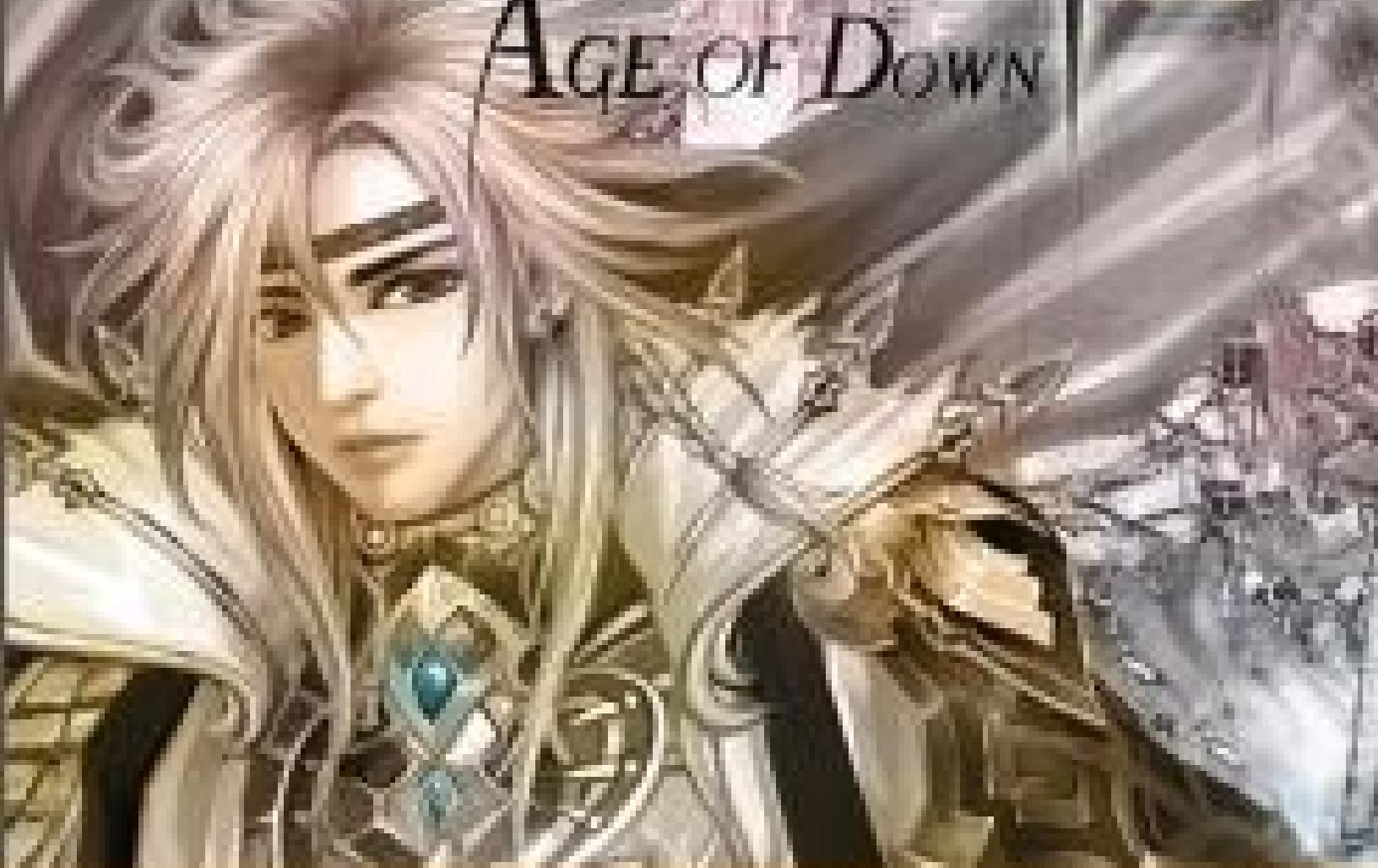


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西方大陸 AGE OF DOWN



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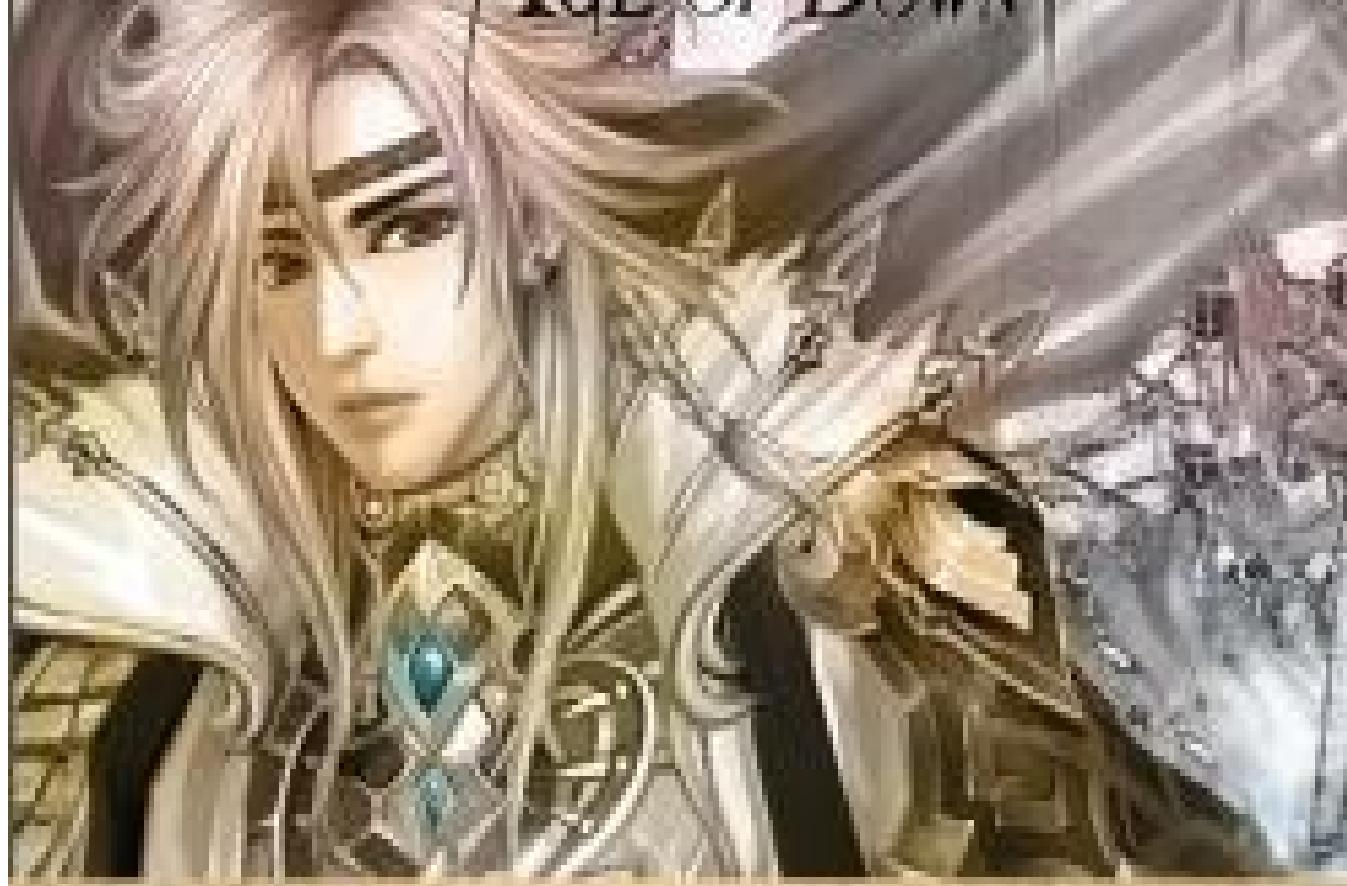
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Radiant Era - Chapter 00-17

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RE Prologue

Prologue

I am a good man, an honest man, a righteous man, an impartial man, a merciful man, a broad-minded man, a compassionate man, an upright and incomparably pure man, a world-renowned flawless man.

To sum up, I alone encompass all human virtues!

– Lin Qi's Autobiography

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RE Chapter 1

Chapter 1 – Travelling by Night

Rebirth calendar, winter 1465, night.

The cold wind of the Odin Ice Origin blew from the northernmost lands, across the five big islands, invading the Western Continent. Borali, the capital of the Seventh Empire of Gaul, was enveloped by darkness and chilling winds. Throughout in the city, there were no signs of life except for the Imperial Household's Dragon Cavalry. Short black cloaks draped over their shoulders, and hands held silver-colored pikes as they rode their horses in formation. The clear sounds of horses' hooves frightened wandering nocturnal creatures.

The cold wind was like a whip in the hands of a giant, ruthlessly lashing the entire city. Most of the city was deeply immersed in darkness, and all residents who followed the rules rigidly had already entered the land of dreams, accompanied by the sound of whistling gales.

Going west of Borali's Central Victory Palace, past the fragrant pavilion on the main street known as 'Pearl of the Continent', then straight along Greenshade Street and Whitelake Street, and to the very end of Fleet Street, however, one would find a large area with many brightly lit buildings. Ten of the best specialized schools were gathered here, starting from the First to the Fifth Borali Universities in addition to the Imperial Army Academy, the Imperial Navy Academy, the Imperial Engineering Academy, the Academy of Imperial Administration, and finally, Borali's Divine Academy. These ten highly specialized schools had gathered here, making the city known as 'Borali's University City' as well as making it the center of attention of the entire continent.

30 years ago, after exhausting the Western continent's last sliver of strength, the century long Land Island War quietly ended at last. Later on after the war, a rarely seen hero king, Sheng Luyi the Thirteenth, rose abruptly to the throne as Emperor of Gaul, the Seventh Empire. Having been the main battlefield, the Gaul Empire obtained every country's economic support and a significant amount of monetary compensation at the end of the war. Exploiting their assistance, Sheng

Luyi the Thirteenth rapidly developed education in the empire. In the span of only 30 years, he established this University City, unprecedented in history.

During these 30 years, it had nurtured countless elite talents. So after the war, the decimated empire had already replenished its population, and it now had a steady flow of fresh blood. Huge empires had fallen behind in these aspects. Perched high on the westernmost part of the continent, just like an awakened lion, the formidable power of the Seventh Empire made the whole continent tremble.

It was both the empire's best and worst age, the empire's most aggressive and extravagantly corrupt era.

Lights were flickering in each of University City's buildings, where people were diligently studying in classrooms and libraries. Occasionally, warhorses whinnying and sounds of lances colliding came from the military school's training grounds. From within the college's staff office, continuous ear-piercing sounds of metal pounding reverberated at all hours, constantly irritating the eardrums.

Given that in this time they lacked nighttime entertainment, the citizens usually went to sleep at nightfall. But here in University City, this kind of liveliness continued until midnight, when it would gradually stop. In such a big University City, just like a heart brimming with energy, hot-blooded youths people were being tempered. The elite students passionately gathered their strength for the future of the empire.

But wherever there was light, there would inevitably be shadows. Given this kind of cordial University City, there would inevitably be several extraordinary characters gathered here.

While his classmates were working hard for the empire's development and success, Lin Qi was swaggering from the Fifth University's main gate with a gloomy face. When the fourth year middle-aged guards by the school gate saw his rigid face, they averted their gaze simultaneously, pretending not to notice this third year Finance and Accounting student who was defying the curfew.

The previous month, Lin Qi had just completed his 18-years-old adulthood ceremony. He had undertaken courses at the Fifth University's Finance and Accounting Faculty for three full years. Black hair, black eyes, yellow skin, he

possessed the typical appearance of oriental people. The sole difference was Lin Qi's physique, which was not inferior to that of the most robust youngsters of the Western continent. Whether it was his height or his broad shoulders, his physique exceeded those of ordinary people.

However, according to rumors, it was believed by outsiders that all Finance and Accounting students of Borali's Fifth University were the empire's parasites. Lin Qi was not in the least an exception; he was a parasite who absorbed nourishment as he pleased, so much so that his body was not just sturdy, but rather slightly obese. When he walked around, he looked like a black bear that had just awakened from hibernation to distant onlookers as he rocked back and forth in an extremely eye-catching way.

Enzo stood on the corner of the street across the Fifth University, using an acacia tree to conceal most of his body. He was wearing the most fashionable triangle hat with broad eaves embedded in metal, the most fashionable short brown cloak imitating the style of the Dragon Cavalry, and a pair of black-colored oriental satin skintight pants which wrapped tightly around his two long legs, distinctly bringing out his leg muscles. Without a doubt, this pair of black-colored satin skintight pants was part of the most popular clothing style in Borali in the last three months.

Enzo's powerful jaw was chewing vigorously on a gum made of a mixture of tobacco and betel palm, its intense flavor filling him with energy. Just like the hat, cloak, and skintight pants on his body, the mixture of tobacco and betel palm was also the trend among the lower middle-class of Borali city.

Looking at Lin Qi, who was walking out very slowly just like a big black bear, Enzo hastily spit out a mouthful of blood-red saliva onto the ground, failing to suppress a depressing whistle. He stretched out half of his body from behind the big tree, waving towards Lin Qi and saying: "Boss, here, here!"

While greeting Lin Qi, Enzo's left hand tightly gripped on a black rolled cloth. It was more than a meter long and bundled very tightly. Enzo occasionally touched it, and he also looked around vigilantly from time to time, while greeting Lin Qi.

Lin Qi also checked the surroundings. He quickly walked past the main street. Soon, his sturdy figure was swallowed by the shadow of the acacia tree.

With the help of a distant light, Lin Qi took a quick glance at the clear outline of Enzo's face, and then he pinched the black rolled cloth under Enzo's armpit, which was hiding a hard metal object. The distinct sensation and shape he felt through the cloth proved that it was precisely the thing he wanted. Lin Qi grinned and laughed noiselessly before he made a gesture with his hand.

Enzo nodded. He took out a mixture of tobacco and betel palm and stuffed it into his mouth, carefully looking around and sticking to the wall. He then quickly walked north along the main street, Enzo's tall and robust figure advancing without making the slightest sound. He crept about just like a ghost, his figure occasionally surfacing from the shadows.

Lin Qi turned his head to look at the several fourth grade students standing at the school gate, laughed noiselessly, and silently caught up with Enzo. Two people, one in front and one at the back were walking, separated by a distance of almost 50 meters, choosing to go through particularly complicated winding alleys. Not long after, they had already left the brightly lit University City area, arriving at Borali city's most chaotic, old northern district.

When passing a certain courtyard door in a nameless alley, Lin Qi called out with a practiced cat-like sound.

The courtyard door opened noiselessly, four robust figures joining this small team. They went 10 meters behind Lin Qi, following Enzo, who kept on walking, not too briskly, nor too slowly.

RE Chapter 2

Chapter 2 – The Crippled Shop

North Borali

The grand Seille River flowed noiselessly. Thin ice bumped into each other as they floated in the river that was over five kilometers wide, producing soft brittle sounds that couldn't be heard. Along the river bank were ten dock workers spread out like an arm, this was Borali's northern dock area. It's also the most chaotic district in Borali, which was mostly composed of villains that struck terror into the people,

At the northernmost part of the dock area, close to where Seille River and Mana River intersected, there was an old-fashioned tavern.

After passing several worn-out flights of steps, ahead of the muddy road was the tavern's front gate made out of two thick and heavy slab stones covered with mottled paint and greasy filth. On the left and right side of the tavern's door were two big flower pots, inside them were small withered saplings. There was a dead mouse tied to one of the branches of the sapling on the left side. As for the sapling on the right side, hanging from one of the branches was the bones of a viper

Above the gate was a crookedly hanged pitch-black board, only when using one's vision to the utmost can one managed to make out the few disorderly writing – Crippled Shop!

Walking through the slab stone gate was a big flat field. On the left side of the field were two rows of stone houses. At the moment, they were filled with big burly fellows who were sleeping disorderly. They could be the dock's homeless sailors, the dockworker, some warehouse keepers, or even heroes coming to the dock area as visitors. The muffled sound of snoring reverberated inside the wide stone houses, some people occasionally talked in their sleep, followed by the deep sound of laughter.

On the right side of the field was a row of folds, nearly a hundred animals were quietly standing inside, chewing on the very few grass. Parked near the folds

were several crude tricycles and chariots. There were also some seemingly unremarkable stands which actually contained materials and crafts specifically put there.

Directly ahead of the field was a big door leading to three stone buildings. A dim light was flickering inside the stone buildings, making them even more dark and gloomy. To the right side of the stone buildings was a flight of stone steps that descended into the ground. A few meters down this flight of stone steps was an underground tavern.

The three stone buildings above ground were the tavern's additional inns, one only needed to pay with money to lodge, even the empire's most wanted criminals would find this residence most satisfying. The underground tavern was the one place where the owner mainly operated. Even when it was this late, it was still as brightly lit and noisy as ever.

Walking down the flight of stone steps and past a heavy old oaken door, one would be greeted by the smell of alcohol that was so strong that it practically made people want to tumble and fall.

Behind the oaken door was a bar large enough to hold several hundred people. On the west wall was a row of wine shelves. Several gorgeously dressed women were standing before the wine shelves, smiling wantonly. A group of drunkards were leaning on the counters, similarly teasing the women.

In the middle of the tavern there was a round wooden platform. On the platform were three young women wearing revealing clothes swaying their bodies vigorously. Several tens of burly men whose face were flushed red were dancing joyfully around the platform, excitedly yelling some catchphrases with their feet ferociously trampling on the stone floor, making a loud and regular 'pa pa' sound. Occasionally, there would be several overly excited men pulling out some glittering copper coins from their pockets and tossing it on the platform. The three dancing women would then sway their bodies even more vigorously, long hair fluttering next to their bodies, red lips and sparkling eyes moving seductively, their bodies moving provocatively, exciting those men to nearly exploding.

A cripple was standing at the corner before a wine shelf, a copper wine cup in

one hand while holding a plain white cloth in the other. He was vigorously cleaning the cup while grimacing. His mouth was holding a big cigar smuggled from overseas while continuously puffing thin streaks of green smoke.

That cripple was the owner of this Crippled Shop. There were extremely few people who knew his real name. Everyone just called him ‘Cripple’. It was the same with his father, his grandfather, his great-grandfather, as well as all his ancestors before him. They were also called ‘Cripple’ and had been the previous owners of this Crippled Shop.

On the wall behind the wine shelves, there was a square portrait about two thirds of a meter long, that was hung on a part of the wall that was in complete shambles, blackened by smoke and dust. It was a portrait of a burly man, his head wearing a red cloth, his left hand was cut off at the wrist, replaced by a sharp iron hook, his right hand holding a big chopper, and his left leg was chopped off at the knee, replaced by an artificial limb made of iron. His face was vicious and on his head stood a multi-colored parrot.

The man in the portrait was the Crippled Shop’s first owner. It was not clear how many generations he was before the current Cripple. Some people said that Crippled Shop’s first owner was once the ringleader of the islands across the three seas, but Cripple always refused to tell anyone – his ancestors were descendants of an intellectual family who always observed the rules.

Suddenly roars of laughter exploded inside the tavern. At a long oaken table at the corner of the tavern, there sat a man wearing a triangle hat. On the brim of the hat was stitched a thumb-sized white skull insignia. This black bearded man suddenly laughed and stood up, lifting a wine cup the size of a person’s head.

“Let’s pray so Old Jack can rest in peace in hell!”

Sitting around the oaken table were more than twenty brawny, bare-chested men. Each and every one of their faces was rude and savage and every single one of them showed a taint of bloody and ferocious aura. They laughed and cheered, as they lifted up their wine cups. This was definitely a group of ruffians; every hair on their bodies was screaming the term ‘ruffian’.

Wine cups were colliding with one another, spilling the pungent, cheap wine all over the table. Those burly men enjoyed drinking to their hearts’ content and

laughing merrily while showing off the profit of their last ‘big transaction’. They unrestrainedly showed off and bragged, making every single person in the tavern know that they just robbed a ship and killed everyone in it while all the goods in the ship became their spoils of war.

In this enriching harvest, the only loss was their old partner, Old Jack. Unfortunately, someone had stabbed his lower abdomen.

Putting the heavy copper wine cup in his hand on the wine shelf behind him, Cripple grabbed another wine cup and vigorously cleaned it again. His rough and fierce face showing a queer smile as he shouted in a loud voice, “Heroes, welcome, so you still remember my lovely Crippled Shop. Drink to your heart’s content; eat to your heart’s content. I have prepared a group of sexy ladies for you. They can definitely satisfy all your requests!”

That group of pirates sitting at the corner excitedly whistled. All the customers in the tavern went into an uproar. The smell of men and alcohol filled the air, making it all the more foul.

Cripple grinned excitedly and laughed heartily. More than half of every profit that this group of bastards painstakingly made on the sea would end up in his hands. He loved this kind of strong bodied, simple-minded people the most. He simply loved them too much. The Crippled Shop could get wealthier and wealthier precisely because of them.

At this moment, a bell under the wine shelf next to Cripple’s feet made a ‘ding-dong’ sound.

Cripple stared blankly, and then murmured in low voice, “That little devil is here? I wonder what good stuff he brings me this time.”

Putting down the wine cup and the white cloth, Cripple retreated into the shadow of the wine shelves.

RE Chapter 3

Chapter 3 – Business Transaction

Cripple carefully snuck out and crept along the hidden corridor behind the wine shelves, winding around large jars of alcohol, climbing over two huge crates filled with smuggled tobacco plants and white sugar, and ended up in front of a stone wall at the end of the corridor.

In the middle of the pitch-dark corridor, there was only dim light coming from a crack on the stone wall. Cripple leaned on the stone wall. Taking advantage of the dim light, his eyes peeped outside through the crack – on the other side of the stone wall was a small but well furnished room. Several candles made the cramped room brightly lit. Thick chairs covered in animal skins encircled the room. Lin Qi was sitting on one of the chairs, he was wearing a weird smile, which make others want to punch, while taking big mouthfuls of wine.

Cripple's pupil shrank down into the size of the tip of a needle. He recognized this rare bronze wine bottle in Lin Qi's hand; it was one of Crippled Shop's last few bottles of rum from a century ago. Good liquor a century old, its worth could not be measured by money, even worse it was also regarded as the Crippled Shop's existing legend.

"This damned little devil, how did he manage to find this treasure?" Cripple was so angry that his body trembled all over. However when his gaze swept over Lin Qi, he caught sight of a sharp sword-like object on Enzo who was not far from Lin Qi. Cripple's mouth couldn't stop quivering as he shook his head.

Cripple stretched his hand to press the stone wall which soundlessly slid open. He walked out while smiling brilliantly.

"Why, what good stuff does my adorable little friend bring for me?" Cripple rubbed both his hands vigorously. He deliberately ignored Lin Qi who sat there drinking wine. His greedy eyes were fixed only on the rolled cloth under Enzo's armpit. He knew Lin Qi's personality well, without sufficient profit, forget him taking even a single step into Crippled Shop. His age was young, but he was even more shrewd than any old person on the road!

'A child with boundless prospects, his father truly has a wonderful son.'

Cripple sighed in his heart.

Seeing that Cripple walked in, Lin Qi shook the wine bottle powerfully, pouring the last bit of wine into his mouth. Happily exhaling a breath reeked with alcohol, Lin Qi randomly threw the wine bottle to the ground, producing a loud sound that made Cripple's heart ache. Burping contentedly, Lin Qi laughed and clapped his hands while saying: "Dear Uncle Cripple, every time I see you, I feel like seeing gold crowing and silver chirping, you can give me a satisfying price, right?"

Cripple rigidly stared at the rolling bronze wine bottle on the ground while slowly taking out one gold coin and one silver coin from his belt.

On the front of the gold coins used nowadays in the Seventh Empire was the portrait of Sheng Lewis the Thirteenth, on the back was a grand and valiant rooster. Anyone with common sense would come to a tacit agreement that gold coins were known as 'crowing'. As for the empire's newly made silver coins, on the back was a soaring skylark, so it also had another name 'chirping'.

Throwing the gold coin and the silver coin onto the only square table in the room unwillingly, Cripple raised his head and laughed: "Uncle Cripple here has a lot of lovely little rooster and little skylark, I only need our dear little friend to take out the thing I'm interested in, the price won't be a problem."

Lin Qi burped. Enzo silently took a step forward, putting the rolled cloth under his armpit heavily on the square table. Cripple swiftly unrolled the black cloth, inside were six sharp sword smeared with anti-corrosion oil. The size of the sword handles were just right to be held in one's hand, the sword bodies were one and a third meter long. On their long, thin bodies were water patterns, evidently from the finest steel. Their sharp points were radiating greenish-blue color, sharp penetrating chill rushed towards one's face making people dare not meet them head on. "Oh, oh, these are really good treasures!" Cripple's eyes shone. His hands quickly arrived on the square table, his fingers lightly stroking the six sharp swords, just like a wastrel affectionately caressing an exceptional beauty. His fingertips quivered slightly, carefully touching every line of the cloud-water pattern on the sword bodies. Fine steel, firm and tough, this was indeed a top-grade sword.

Conveniently grabbing one sharp sword, Cripple's hand trembled. The candles in the room simultaneously dimmed. The air made a whistling sound just like a viper biting, few dazzling gleams invisible to the naked eye tore the air open, piercing through the standing armor in the corner of the room.

This suit of armor was manufactured from thick leather, its vital points were covered in steel plates the size of a hand. Under the power of the sword in Cripple's hand, the leather was ripped open just like a piece of paper, the steel plates as thick as a finger on the stomach and armpit made a sharp sound while being pierced through.

The candles flashed again. Cripple withdrew the sword and carefully looked it over, there were only a few friction marks thinner than a hair on the sword body; it was basically undamaged. He couldn't help clicking his tongue in admiration; this suit of armor in the corner of the room became merely decoration, but he paid a lot of money to get this standardized armor from the imperial army's supply warehouse, only middle-ranked generals could wear this battle armor.

In front of this sharp sword, this battle armor which only middle-ranked generals could wear couldn't withstand even a single blow; this proved what degree the penetrative force of this sharp sword had reached.

Looking at the result of Cripple testing the sword, Lin Qi laughed heartily. He also excitedly rubbed both of his hands, countless gold coins and silver coins were dancing through the air in front of his eyes. He laughed towards Enzo: "I told you so, the stuff this time will definitely make Uncle Cripple satisfied, right Uncle Cripple? But it was not easy for us to take this from the Military Academy's warehouse!"

Cripple snorted coldly. He carefully put the sharp sword on the square table, narrowing his eyes while silently looking at the six sharp swords.

Lin Qi raised his eyebrows, withdrawing both of his hands into his sleeves at the same time. Enzo silently put his hand on his waist where there was a hidden pouch; inside there was a long sword exactly the same as the sharp swords on the table. Enzo judged the distance between himself and Cripple; with only one sword blow, he was ninety percent certain he could pierce through Cripple's throat.

The candles inside the room shivered slightly, any movement caused the wind to agitate the candles.

The fine hair on the back of Cripple's neck suddenly stood. Like a frog which was stared at by a venomous viper, he got goosebumps all over his body.

After muttering to himself for a while, Cripple coldly laughed and shook his head: "Could Military Academy's warehouse have this kind of excellent weapons? Absurd, it could pierce through thick uniformed steel plate the size of a palm in one strike. Although this kind of sharp sword is a good treasure, there were also a lot of people waiting to buy them at a high price. However, I want to hear the truth, where did you get them from?"

Enzo's hand held the sword hilt steadily. His sharp, stern vision was firmly locked on Cripple's throat.

Lin Qi unconcernedly crossed one leg over the other. He giggled and said: "Their origin, is it significant? They won't remain in your hands anyway!"

Cripple frowned. He considered for a while, then suddenly broke into laughter while shaking his head.

Feigning generosity, Cripple pulled out a fat purse from his bosom. He grabbed a handful of gold coins from inside and tossed it onto the square table.

Lin Qi's eyes suddenly turned golden colored. He happily pounced on them.

RE Chapter 4

Chapter 4 – Customers

“Gold coins, gold coins, lovely gold coins!” Terribly drunk, Lin Qi laid on those few gold coins and shouted on the verge of hysteria: “Lovely gold coins, my little darlings, my cuties, lovely gold coins! Oh, oh, a small part of my lifelong dream has come true!”

Enzo and Cripple twisted their mouths at the same time.

Lin Qi’s lifelong dream had been described to them countless times – after he died, with his grave filled with gold, he wanted to be able to lie comfortably in the middle of countless gold and sleep peacefully forever. For the sake of gold, he would do almost anything!

Coughing lightly, Cripple slapped the square table heavily.

“Six top quality sharp swords, one for three gold coins.”

Cripple’s voice was solemn, permeated with an absolute and irrefutable kind of dignity.

Lin Qi looked up angrily. He looked at the tens of glittering gold coins on the table then roared with rage: “Uncle Cripple, are you running a scam here? These kind of top quality sharp swords, their materials alone are more than three gold coins! Ten gold coins for one, or else I go find someone else!”

Cripple shouted even louder: “Damn it, ten gold coins? Why don’t you rob people instead? Three gold coins, my profit is already small. Let me tell you what kind of business that we do, if it’s the empire that purchases these sharp sword, the definite value is indeed the figure you just said, but this is the black market!”

Lin Qi sneakily and swiftly collected the gold coins on the table one by one. What he did couldn’t be seen clearly, only that any gold coin that fell onto his palm would vanish without a trace. This kind of bizarre ability made Cripple and Enzo gasp in amazement. What kind of outstanding natural talent possessed this innate kind of skill?

In a very short time 18 pieces of gold coins and one piece of silver coin were

collected by Lin Qi. With both of his hands on the square table, he roared angrily towards Cripple: “Right, dearest Uncle Cripple, this is a black market, to demand a lower price is a must. However, the price you give is too unreasonable, this price not only insults these six top quality sharp swords, but even more insults me!”

With both of his eyes widely opened, Lin Qi roared: “Don’t tell me I didn’t sleep most of the night, running several kilometers to this damned place in the middle of the night, merely for the sake of trifling 18 gold coins? I do big business. I wouldn’t work so hard for the sake of merely 18 gold coins!”

Cripple snorted coldly, ‘*trifling 18 gold coins?*’ Lin Qi was someone who would smash another person’s head in for just a single piece of copper coin. He and Lin Qi had known each other for three years, even compared to Lin Qi’s father – Cripple’s black bearded old friend – he was more clear as to what kind of trash this boy is. Don’t even mention 18 gold coins, for the sake of 18 copper coins he would be willing to trek several kilometers all night.

Three pieces of gold coin for one sharp sword, this price was already lowered, but thinking back about that bottle of wine was drunk by Lin Qi a short while ago!

Cripple’s mood became incomparably cold-hearted. He gritted his teeth and said: “Three pieces of gold coins for one sword, no room for discussion. However the batch of eastern medicinal materials you took from me here last month, use that amount to cancel this out If you still don’t agree with my conditions, you can go find that damned hunchback! See what price he can give you!”

“May almighty gods bless and protect your ancestors!” Lin Qi immediately became all smiles. He glanced at the bronze bottle of wine on the ground, laughing lightly and said: “In that case, deal! This bottle of wine is to celebrate another success in our business. Ah, tonight’s alcohol, according to tradition, you will treat us to drink, won’t you?”

Cripple snorted. He walked to the side of the table, rolled the six sharp swords inside a cloth, opened a hidden panel on the wall and tossed the rolled cloth inside. Sounds of metal clashing against each other could be heard gradually getting further away, who knew where these few sharp swords went to after

entering the hidden compartment.

His thumb gesturing towards the direction of the tavern, Cripple coldly snorted and said: "Tradition, you can drink, but if you dare cause trouble, I will break your legs! Oi, Wei Ke, you can come out now, is this how you treat your dearest Uncle Cripple?"

The candles flickered. In the shadows at the corner of the room, a slender silhouette slowly stood up. Wearing black skin tight clothes, just like a big monkey, the petite Wei Ke walked out from the corner of the room while holding a crossbow. He carefully took out the arrow, which its tip was black, from the crossbow, after pulling the trigger, it made a 'peng' sound of empty bowstring.

Lin Qi swayed his body happily, two arms lightly swinging at his sides. He glibly teased: "Holla, holla, dearest Wei Ke, you can't be like this, how can you aim your crossbow at our dearest Uncle Cripple? Oh, next time don't be like this. Especially since your arrows are dipped in poison; you really are a bad boy!"

Wrinkling his nose, distinguishing that thin, fishy smell in the air, Lin Qi laughed all the more happily "You actually smeared the Seven Step Snake's Venom I got from that damned old man last time on your arrow, Wei Ke, you really are a bad boy!"

Wei Ke bared his teeth and laughed towards Cripple, who had cold sweat seeping out unceasingly from his forehead, then carefully put the crossbow inside the bag hanging from his waist.

Cripple cast a sidelong glance at Lin Qi, he had to keep his guard up against this boy. Seven Step Snake's venom, damn it, they actually smeared this kind of evil venom on the arrow! A crossbow was an efficient assassination weapon that people despised already, adding on Seven Step Snake's Venom, these kids, one was more sinister than the last, one was more ruthless than the last. The Seventh Empire's dark side, how could it produce people with these qualities?

"Worse still, they are at my place!" Cripple breathed in a mouthful of air deeply, and afterwards pretended to be magnanimous and laughed: "Fine, fine, dearest children, you can go have fun already. Eighteen gold coins, although this is a huge sum of money, you need to spend a bit here at my place, otherwise youngsters like you holding on to such a huge sum of money, it's not a good

thing!"

"Let me pay for the alcohol, but Uncle Cripple's place here still has a lot more interesting things. You all quickly go spend some money, otherwise I will feel sad, my gold coins, my gold coins, you know!" Cripple used his dirty sleeve to rub the corner of his eyes and mournfully lamented "My gold coins, it was earned piece by piece from copper coins; you all took 18 gold coins all at once!"

Lin Qi didn't pay attention to Cripple , tonight's business transaction was already completed, with regards to Cripple, his existence wasn't indispensable. Now he should drink some alcohol, go have some fun, and then when happily drinking alcohol he could look for a new opportunity to make money.

The Crippled Shop was a good place; Lin Qi could always find a lot of opportunities to make money. He absolutely wouldn't let any opportunity slip by.

Opening the secret door, a few people were going to the tavern to drink and have some fun, one of the tavern's female maid appeared from the shadows just like a ghost.

"Owner, a few strange customers came, Lisa let them slap her in the face."

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RE Chapter 5

Chapter 5 – Travelers from the East

Back when Lin Qi and Cripple had just started their business transaction, the tavern's thick wooden door was pushed open heavily, a group of men wearing black silken cloaks strode in at strange pace. Cold wind came whistling in behind them, bone piercing chill rapidly permeating throughout the warm tavern. All those wild and crude patrons, drenched in sweat and shouting loudly, put down their wine cups and looked over the new arrivals, all at the same time.

"Tch, rich uncle!" said a shifty-eyed man, greedily swallowing a mouthful of saliva.

Cloaks made from black silk from the East. In the Gaul Empire, only the nobility could enjoy these kinds of precious goods. Moreover, ordinary nobles wouldn't be able to shoulder the expensive price of one bolt of silk; only those belonging to major nobility could use silk to craft clothing. As for ordinary minor nobles, having a pair of silk stockings was already a thing worth showing off.

"Hey, rich fat sheep!" several robust men with thick arms and legs looked at this group of people with interest, their greedy eyes constantly sweeping up and down their targets' bodies. A group of customers wearing clothes made of silk unexpectedly came to the dock area's Crippled Shop in the middle of the night; it's like a group of little lambs entering a wolf's nest, simply asking for trouble!

Especially these few customers, since they looked so fragile!

They were all wearing strange-shaped hats, one foot tall round-shaped hats, their tops flat, and on them a sculpture of a poisonous lizard made of black jade. Compared to these burly men inside the tavern, their figures were obviously particularly petite and frail, even the tallest among them wasn't taller than 6 feet, simply incomparable with those high-spirited 7-8 feet tall burly men inside the tavern.

Furthermore, what made one fascinated was the fact that the whole group of travellers had the delicate, pale complexions of pretty boys. Their complexions were deathly pale, similar to corpses, especially the young man leading the

group. His face was so white that it was almost transparent, even showing unhealthy hints of blue . This kind of physique, this kind of complexion... it clearly was a group of sick travellers. The wolves inside the tavern were confident, any one of them could easily deal with these few rich 'fat sheep'.

Striding in at a gentle pace while making soft rustling sounds, a group of 19 young men with deathly pale complexions and bright, clean faces strolled into the tavern. Two men at the very back easily closed the thick, heavy oaken doors and the whistling cold wind was once again blocked outside.

The youth leading the group coughed lightly, he extended his right hand from under the cloak, and grabbed a snow white kerchief to rub his nose vigorously. Jewels glittered past, and several hundred burly men inside the tavern stood up almost at the same time. They gazed excitedly at this youth's right hand – what a valuable hand, his fingers were filled with rings, in total nine gold rings embedded with large chunks of gems and fine jade!

Huge red gems, dazzling blue gems, rare and precious green gems, and even two abstruse 'Tiger Eye Gems' among them; these few precious stones' value was very high. For the sake of these precious stones, nobles in Borali were willing to spend money extravagantly without batting an eyelid! In particular those two Tiger Eye Gems, which were said to have miraculous effects for men, since they could make men vigorous and invincible in bed – each was worth more than ten thousand gold!

Fat sheep, unprecedeted fat sheep! Never mind plundering cargo ships in the ocean, all that profit couldn't even compare to one finger's worth of riches on this youth!

The female maid nearest to the tavern's door, Lisa, laughed. She threw herself on that youth while bringing a gust of fragrant air, then held his head and pressed it onto her own body. Lisa's upper body only wore a piece of cloth which barely wrapped her chest. Her two white breasts, each the size of a small child's head, were mostly exposed. She enthusiastically embraced this youth, her right hand customarily grabbing towards the young man's lower body.

This was Lisa's signature move in Crippled Shop. Regardless of whether it was sailors from a ship or workers from the dock, or other men with all sorts of

professions, if Lisa used this move to assault them, they would generously offer all the money in their wallet down to the last copper!

However, this time Lisa made a huge mistake. That young man never in his wildest dreams thought that when he had just entered Crippled Shop, he would suffer such enthusiastic ‘surprise attack’ from a woman! Facing Lisa’s strange actions, he who was usually exceedingly sharp-witted simply couldn’t respond in the least bit.

Lisa used her breasts to smoothly rub the youth’s face quite a few times. Her small and delicate hand was also stroking below the youth’s hip. Her five fingers kneaded lightly, but the only thing in contact with her frivolous hand was smooth silk clothing, there was nothing else underneath!

“You!” Lisa shouted in astonishment! What’s the matter with this youth? Could it be that he was really a woman disguised as a man? Why was that thing missing?

“Slut, accept death!” The youth’s figure twisted, vigorously struggling to get free of Lisa’s enthusiastic embrace. One slap on the face made Lisa stagger seven or eight steps back, leaving a burn mark on her face. This one slap on the face was extremely powerful. When Lisa’s body staggered backwards, the corners of her mouth had already spurted an arrow of blood, quite a few teeth also flying out along with the blood.

“Hey, Easterner!” the black bearded man who had just raised his wine cup and shouted loudly along with his pirates subordinates, parted the crowd and strolled towards the youth who had just taken action. He sneered while speaking in Eastern language with great difficulty, “This is not the place where you can just act recklessly, you actually dare injure the beautiful and lovely little sister Lisa, I think you should give her compensation!”

All the burly men looked at these few youths greedily; their gazes were full of malice.

Except for that youth who just took action, the men behind him all bent their waists slightly, standing still in a kind of humble and respectful posture. So much so that their eyes were fixed on the ground in front of their feet. They had been perfectly still ever since entering the tavern, continuously maintaining this

uncomfortable posture.

The youth who just took action sneered arrogantly. He raised his head slightly, using hoarse yet shrill voice to say, “A slut, if she dies then she dies. What could she be worth? Not just her, but all of you as well, hehe!”

The black bearded man halted his steps a few meters away from these youngsters. When getting closer to them, the black bearded man had perceived a sense of danger. This feeling was even more intense than two years ago when he had unexpectedly run into five berserker warships from Dalian Island on the northern ocean! The black bearded man trusted his own intuition. These young men were some of the very few people who seemed incomparably frail, but were actually extremely dangerous, maybe even to the extent of being deadly.

‘Wretched Easterners! ‘

Only when meeting a lot of sailors with vast knowledge could one know how many dangerous people and things existed in the East.

These 19 youngsters in front of the eyes, they gave people the same feeling as the poisonous lizards lying on their hats. Silent, yet deadly.

Coughing awkwardly, the black bearded man felt like retreating.

At this moment, Cripple noiselessly walked out from behind the wine shelves.

“This is the Crippled Shop, you are all my customers. As customers, you can’t start a fight here in this Crippled Shop.”

RE Chapter 6

Chapter 6 – Scheme

When Cripple appeared, Lin Qi was standing next to the wine shelves while fixedly staring at those few youths. He almost went mad looking at that youth leader who used his white kerchief to carefully wipe his palm. When the youth's fingers moved, the rings on his hand produced one enchanting halo after another under the light.

Almost all of Lin Qi's blood rushed into his brain and heart. Sweat unceasingly flowed down his feverish body.

"This guy is so rich!" Lin Qi had difficulty simply swallowing a mouthful of saliva. His high blood pressure caused his vision to turn black. With his nostrils violently trembling, Lin Qi inhaled deep breaths, suppressing the frenzied blaze in his mind with great difficulty. With his long sleeves concealing both of his hands, Lin Qi's fingers continuously and gently stroked the triggers of two small-sized crossbows hidden there. He found controlling himself difficult. More than once he almost raised his hands to launch an attack against that youth.

Gold, bright yellow gold; gems, sparkling shiny gems. Lin Qi groaned gloomily. He pressed his right hand firmly against his heart. He inhaled deeply, controlling his own breathing with great difficulty, letting his boiling blood flow throughout his body, avoiding the risk of dying from his heart violently cracking open or his blood vessels exploding.

"So many fat sheep, unfortunately why must they come to Crippled Shop?"

In his heart, Lin Qi crazily cursed all the gods he knew of. No matter which god delivered this group of fat sheep to Crippled Shop, from today onwards, this god shall become Lin Qi's mortal enemy. That youth's right hand which was resplendent with jewels, never in Lin Qi's life had he ever gazed upon such a valuable right hand.

Lin Qi had the simplest, plainest, and most honest outlook of the world. In his view, in this world there were only two types of money: his money and other people's money. There were only two types of people: rich people and poor

people. There were only two types of things: valuable treasures and worthless garbage.

Making some rich people become poor people, snatching away their valuable treasures, making other people's money become his own, this was Lin Qi's ideal, this was his aim, this was his lifelong goal. His life was built upon money. Without money, his life would be a bleak existence without any trace of light.

This youth's right hand was like a beacon, illuminating the endless road of Lin Qi's life.

"Such a pity, this is Cripple's territory!" Swallowing saliva with difficulty, Lin Qi put down both of his hands. Releasing the bow strings, he carefully stowed the two poison tipped arrows into the leather bag attached to his belt. He walked out from the shadow of the wine shelves, laughed and leaned on the long wine stand while making a neck-slicing gesture towards that youth.

"Easterner, considering you have the same blood lineage as my ancestors, I solemnly warn you! This is Crippled Shop; this is Uncle Cripple's territory. You dare hit his prettiest and loveliest female maid, you are finished!"

Lin Qi's words were filled with malice. He eagerly looked forward to instigate a fight between the patrons of Crippled Shop and these big fat sheep with black cloaks draping over their shoulders. In a split second, he had formulated a plan. When a conflict happened between these big fat sheep and the patrons of Crippled Shop, he would then have the opportunity to take advantage of the situation and reap the benefits from these people.

For the sake of gold coins, Lin Qi would cooperate with Cripple; similarly for the sake of even more gold coins, Lin Qi would sell Cripple out without the slightest hesitation.

The white faced youth curled up the corners of his mouth, showing a trace of an aloof and arrogant sneer. With his left hand behind his back and slightly bent waist, he strolled to the front of the long wine shelves. He narrowed his eyes while sizing up Cripple from top to bottom, then shot a glance at Lin Qi. Withdrawing his right hand inside his cloak, he pulled out a half foot long gold bar the thickness of no less than a thumb.

Lightly placing the gold bar on the oily wine shelf, the white faced youth spoke

in fluent West Continent common language: "My name is Jiang Yong. In accordance with your customs, you may address me as 'Jiang', or call me Steward Jiang."

Wearing a trace of a queer smile that made people's scalp to go numb, Jiang Yong softly said: "With regards to that young lady, I offer my sincerest apologies. However I hope you can understand, I'm not used to having people too close to me."

Sighing lightly, Jiang Yong used his finger to casually tap the gold bar on the wine shelf. His fair and delicate finger silently penetrated the gold bar. His finger didn't penetrate through the wine shelf made of a hundred year old oaken board. Instead, it left an inch deep hole in the wood.

The men who had stood up and were arrogantly prepared to make a profit from these fat sheep went back to their own seats in unison. They turned their attention away from those fat sheep, raised their wine cups, and the hubbub of noises rose once again. Three dancing girls enthusiastically opened their thighs and rhythmically kicked their long white legs, causing the men to express passionate shouts and resounding laughter. The tavern returned to normal in a flash, the smell of sweat and alcohol filled the air once again.

Two of Crippled Shop's servants carried the unconscious Lisa away, quickly disappearing from the tavern as it seethed with excitement.

Lin Qi, who was standing next to Cripple, sucked in a mouthful of cold air. He was stunned while staring at the gold bar and wine shelf which had been pierced through by Jiang Yong with one finger. He abruptly gasped one mouthful of air after another.

Such formidable strength, perhaps his guy called Jiang Yong already had the strength of a high-leveled knight? Except for those few high-leveled knights who legends said could cleave boulders, Lin Qi didn't know what kind of freak could do what Jiang Yong had done. Flesh and blood piercing through a gold bar? What was his finger made of?

This was not a fat sheep, rather a ferocious beast with extravagant fur. Although the beast's fur was very valuable, risking one's life for the sake of gold coins was obviously not wise. Unless it was proven that this Jiang Yong had

enough wealth to arouse Lin Qi, then those few rings he wore on his hand were still not temptation enough to make Lin Qi take action.

Of course, if Lin Qi knew that Jiang Yong really had a huge amount of wealth, Lin Qi could let Jiang Yong know; even though he had valiant strength, he definitely shouldn't carry too much money within the Ironfist Brotherhood's territory.

After another deep look at Jiang Yong, Lin Qi walked away from the wine shelves, bringing Enzo and Wei Ke to sit at a wine stand. He shouted loudly to order some good wine and roasted meat, then laughed merrily while enjoying the dancing girls' bold and unrestrained movements.

In the blink of an eye, Cripple already led Jiang Yong and his companions away from the wine shelves.

Only Lin Qi, who paid attention to them out of the corners of his eyes, took notice of how they left, especially when several of Jiang Yong's companies were walking, their cloaks were pushed aside by a table's legs, exposing the deep cyan robes inside.

Such an unusual style for a robe, it was filled with embroidery of a sort of bizarre creature which looked like a python with a mouth full of sharp teeth and four what looked like rooster claws on its body. That creature which seemed savage and ferocious, yet magnificent and elegant, exuded a taint of alluring evil force that made people palpitate.

"Easterner!"

Raising his wine cup and fiercely drinking a mouthful, Lin Qi vaguely stated: "This is Borali City; it's this Uncle Lin Qi's Ironfist Brotherhood's territory!"

Narrowing his eyes, Lin Qi said in a low voice: "Wei Ke, order some people to keep an eye on them, I want to know how much money they bring after all!"

The petite Wei Ke stuffed a big piece of fatty meat into his mouth, hurriedly nodded his head, and conveniently groped the butt of a passing by female maid.

RE Chapter 7

Chapter 7 – Messenger from the Family

On the second day, snowflakes the size of a child's palm finally fell gently from the sky which was densely covered with dark clouds. Borali City immediately became a vast expanse of whiteness.

At dawn, Lin Qi stuck up his legs while sitting inside Crippled Shop. At a table in the corner of the tavern, Lin Qi rested both of his feet on the surface of the table. He held a tobacco pipe made of corncob in his mouth, smoking while drinking pungent gin.

The wine was really good. It was one of Cripple's collections, shipped from overseas. It was a batch which materials were meticulously selected and brewed. It had pure and strong fragrance, incomparable with the low quality product which Cripple sells to the group of men from the dock area.

After opening his mouth to spew out several smoke rings, Lin Qi let out a burp reeked of alcohol. Holding a big copper wine cup while pouring a mouthful of wine, he felt comfortably warm from head to foot which made him want to sleep. However there were some matters weighing on his heart, so he forcefully raised his spirit, then narrowed his eyes to look around the tavern, hoping to see Jiang Yong's group of easterners from last night.

Big fat sheep, big fat sheep from the East. Although this group of fat sheep seemed like fierce tigers wrapped in sheepskin, their riches really made people amazed. Lin Qi wanted to find out some clues from them, first calculate how big their background is, then weigh the proportion between their wallet and their strength, finally deciding whether to act against them.

Although this was the dock area, although this was Crippled Shop's territory, although that group of strange white faced youths seemed not easy to deal with, as long as Jiang Yong's wealth was sufficiently revealed, Lin Qi would definitely act against them.

"My jingling purse, my jangling purse!" Lin Qi stretched his hand to stroke the purse on his waist, merely one night and it already dried out just like a lemon

extracted of its water until it was dry. He let out a distressed sigh while drawing out his fingers to calculate.

As the Big Brother of Ironfist Brotherhood, there were really too many places to spend money. Occupying Borali University City, with the entire area of University City as its territory, having dozens of core members and hundreds of outer members, the strength of Ironfist Brotherhood was ranked top in the entire Borali City. However Lin Qi wasn't a local after all. He had only operated in Borali City for merely three years, his foundation was unstable. He definitely didn't have stable financial resources, so Lin Qi's wallet was always in a dried up condition.

"Eighteen jingling noises, my golden coins jingle, sharing the bed with me for barely one night then disappearing already!"

Sighing a little dejectedly, Lin Qi grabbed the wine cup to drink another mouthful. Heavily spewing out another mouthful of thick smoke, Lin Qi stiffened his fingers and cursed inwardly. Eighteen gold coins, it was enough for common people to lead a comfortable life for 2-3 years, but they left him after merely one night.

What to do? Several core members of Ironfist Brotherhood who similarly were students of the Fifth University often fight with students from other schools under the influence of alcohol. If caught by the patrolling Dragon Cavalry, merely the cost to vouch for them was already 8 gold coins!

As for the remaining 10 gold coins, they were already given to those outer members. A while ago Ironfist Brotherhood clashed with a hostile power. Quite a few hired thugs had their ribs broken. Medical expenses, food expenses, housing expenses; all these things needed money! Ten gold coins were like lively little birds flying away from Lin Qi's purse. Now there were only 30-plus copper coins remaining in his purse!

"After I die, I dream of having my tomb and coffin made out of gold!" Sighing, Lin Qi forced a smile towards Enzo who was sitting perfectly still on one side: "But looking at it now, my lifelong target is getting further and further away from me! Gold, gold, glittering gold! Frankly speaking, no matter if it is various gods of the heavens or what they called demons of hell, whoever can give me

gold, I would believe in them!"

Enzo rubbed his nose and sneezed heavily. He slanted his eyes while gazing at this big brother of his, then heavily spat out a mouthful of scarlet saliva. The smell of the mixture of betel palm and tobacco stung the nose. Lin Qi grimaced, wrinkled his nose, and sneezed.

The two people toasted their wine cups. Enzo drank a mouthful of wine, then vaguely said: "Boss, your family is so rich!"

Lin Qi's face became gloomy. He grabbed the corncob pipe and knocked it ferociously on the surface of the table, taking out the tobacco ashes inside. He said with a gloomy face: "You're right; my old man should be very rich. But that is his money, not mine yet. My old man's physique is healthy and strong, no different from a magical beast, before 50-60 years of time, he won't be leaving that money to me!"

Lin Qi let out a long sigh and shook his head while saying: "Moreover, assuming my old man encounters a misfortune and dies, I still have rivals."

Enzo grinned, then stuffed a lump of a mixture of tobacco and betel palm into his mouth and chewed in big mouthfuls. His eyes swept several female maids' bodies back and forth. With a hint of seemingly natural smile hanging on the corners of his mouth, he complacently threw flirtatious glances towards them.

During the day, there weren't many customers inside Crippled Shop. Several female maids stood next to the wine shelves with nothing to do. Finding Enzo's handsome and strong figure facing towards them, they laughed wantonly one after another. The female maids in the dock area may not be virgins or women of honor, but being able to attract the interest of anyone from the opposite sex was already a form of glory for them.

Lin Qi wrinkled his brows, sinking into a deep pondering.

Although he was merely 18 years old, he had already begun to ponder about his own life, about the successes and failures of his past 18 years. With the help of alcohol, Lin Qi formulated an even more ambitious plan for his own life, '*Maybe merely having a tomb and a coffin made of gold seems too petty, maybe during my lifetime I should live in a palace made of gold?*'

Glancing with disdain at Enzo who was exchanging flirting glances with the female maids, Lin Qi said mockingly: "Women, oh, women! Enzo, if you had money, which woman would refuse you? Glittering gold, oh, I would rather have a beauty made of gold lying on my bed, I won't even let these annoying creatures near me!"

Enzo didn't pay any attention to Lin Qi. Having been acquainted for three years, he knew Lin Qi's near-paranoia pursuit of gold. '*This kind of young and inexperienced imp, who knows what benefit might these lovely women have?*' Enzo inhaled deeply, feeling the heat inside his body suddenly rush up.

However, while stroking the empty purse on his waist, Enzo silently applied a method to control Qi taught by an instructor at the Faculty of Military to strongly suppress this heat.

Turning his head towards Lin Qi, Enzo spoke in exceptional seriousness: "You're right, Boss, I suddenly found that gold coins are indeed lovely."

Enzo hadn't even finished speaking when the door of the tavern was roughly kicked open by someone. Snow rolled up in gale pounced in. An incomparably hoarse voice sounded loudly: "Cripple, this messenger is looking for our family's young master; the Lord assigned me to deliver him a letter. Hey, young ladies, give this uncle a cup of wine!"

Hearing the loud voice, Lin Qi jumped up and shouted in a pleasantly surprised manner: "Aha, Uncle Tie Chui, why have you come?"

RE Chapter 8

Chapter 8 – A Letter from Home

Tie Chui, who was an extremely tall and robust bearded man, directly charged into the tavern. He was nearly as tall as the tavern's door itself. With a thick cloak made of the skin of a black bear draping over his shoulders, Tie Chui's smooth forehead was steaming with heat. A thick and ugly scar on his face which was cut by a sharp knife occasionally twisted, just like a wiggling centipede numerous feet long.

Hearing Lin Qi's shout, Tie Chui, who was even more robust than a Giant Northern Ice Bear, laughed 'GaGa!', walked in large strides towards Lin Qi, hugged him squarely on the waist and powerfully flung him upwards. Lin Qi shouted as Tie Chui had almost flung him to the roof. Fortunately his movements were agile and his reactions quick, he put both of his hands on the tavern's ceiling to stop his body; otherwise his head would definitely be badly bruised.

"Young master, it's really good that you are here!" Tie Chui rubbed his nose powerfully, turned his head towards the wine shelves and roared: "Young ladies, give this uncle a cup of wine! I warn you, who dares add even a drop of water inside, I will definitely pulverize all the bones in her body!"

All female maids' faces around the bar, without exception, changed color. Since they worked at Crippled Shop, they were accustomed to meet men of all sorts of profession from the dock area. However Tie Chui, regardless of his body size or power, undoubtedly was much scarier than those men they've met before. This person didn't seem like the kindhearted type. He would keep his promise. If he said he would pulverize all the bones in their bodies, then he definitely would do so.

Lin Qi and Tie Chui hugged each other tightly. Lin Qi laughed loudly, turned his head towards Enzo, and introduced them: "Enzo, this is Uncle Tie Chui, my wrestling teacher from when I was young. Uncle Tie Chui, this is Enzo, my good brother, my assistant, a brilliant swordsman!"

Enzo looked at Tie Chui in astonishment. From the body of this robust man,

whose bear skin cloak was draped over his shoulders, he could sense a hint of fiery strength. Even though the wind and snow was whistling through the door, Enzo who was standing in front of Tie Chui still felt burning hot from head to foot, as if he was standing in front of a red-hot iron ingot.

Tie Chui looked deeply at Enzo. Enzo only felt the pit of his stomach heating up, as if he had been hit by a heavy hammer. His body staggered and nearly fell backward, but he braced the muscles all over his body, firmly standing in his original position. Tie Chui nodded his head in praise, vigorously patted his smooth head, laughed, and said: "Young master, this brother of yours is not bad, hehe, such strength at such a young age, not bad!"

Tie Chui turned his body and heavily kicked close the tavern's wooden door, then went straight over to the wine shelves and roared at the top of his voice: "Ladies, are you deaf? Good wine, give me some good wine! Such a cold day, a customer came; moreover I am also your boss's old friend, you won't even serve me a cup of wine?"

The sound of Tie Chui's roars could practically be compared with the screams of magical beasts. The tinkling and clanging sound of wine bottles inside the wine shelves and wine cups burst out. Several female maids were so frightened that they were trembling all over, nearly falling to their butts on the floor. The female maid with the most courage grabbed a wine cup large enough to contain a full liter of wine with trembling hands and hurriedly poured in a whole bottle of strong rum.

Tie Chui hummed in satisfaction. An iron chain as thick as a pinkie rolled out 7-8 meters away from inside his sleeves in a wave of a hand while producing an ear-piercing screech that tore through the air. It coiled around the large wine cup and brought it right in front of him. Deeply inhaling the smell of alcohol, Tie Chui raised the wine cup and shouted loudly: "Young master, seeing you safe and sound, Tie Chui is very happy!"

With a splashing sound, Tie Chui drank the whole liter of alcohol. He was so happy that he gave a hiccup reeked of alcohol. He then moved his butt to sit on the wooden chair next to him. After feeling around his chest, he fished out an envelope which he handed over to Lin Qi. "Young master, although you haven't been back for three full years, the Lord said, this year during the New Year

holidays, you have to go back no matter what.”

Giving another hiccup full of satisfaction, Tie Chui fished out a leather tobacco sack from inside his sleeves and grabbed a handful of tobacco from inside it. He stuffed the tobacco inside his mouth and chewed in big mouthfuls. He kept chewing while vaguely said: “The Lord has something he wants you to do. Eh, young master, although now you’re already a university student, the Lord hopes you could go back to give him some face in front of that group of local wealthy landlords!”

After swallowing a mouthful of saliva, Tie Chui again turned his head towards those female maids and howled: “Where is Cripple? As long as he’s not dead, call him to come out to meet an old friend! Ah, this uncle and he also haven’t met for three years already, I really had missed that old rogue for a while! Hahaha, he hasn’t been crippled by someone right?”

Following the sound of Tie Chui’s roars, Cripple noiselessly came out from a certain dark corner of the wine shelves. Cripple looked at Tie Chui with a ‘surprised’ look, spread out both of his hands and shouted: “Ah! Haha! Look who has come? Isn’t this Tie Chui? How does the order of arrest by Borali Guardian Office taste like? Hahaha, you came to Borali, other than my territory, you don’t dare to go anywhere else, right? When did you arrive by boat?”

Tie Chui made several ‘hehe’ sound of strange laughter, then stood up and hugged Cripple tightly.

Cripple sincerely asked: “How’s the black-bearded old man doing?”

Tie Chui proudly slapped Cripple’s shoulder and laughed: “The Lord is very healthy, oh, it’s just that the harvest recently was not quite good, so his mood is not good!”

To one side, Lin Qi opened up the envelope and read the letter which was written in his father’s own handwriting. The familiar handwriting still followed the same pattern, every stroke was like the cut from a large knife, showing a hint of boorish strength. Looking at these letters, Lin Qi felt like he was looking at his own father, a robust man with the complete and utter unruliness of a feral bear.

Enzo curiously moved to Lin Qi’s side, then crooked his head to look at the letter. Regarding the Lord’s family background, Enzo was somewhat aware.

According to what Lin Qi said, his father was a miller in the 3rd ranked imperial port city called ‘Dunerk’. In the flour trading business, he controlled nearly all of Dunerk’s import and export of flour. The flour in at least three provinces of the northern part of the empire were also supplied by his mills.

Referring from what he said, Lin Qi should come from a family with business that had been thriving for generations. However, a son of a dutiful and honest person from a well-off family, how could he establish an organization like the Ironfist Brotherhood in three short years?

Glancing at Tie Chui, what made Enzo even more curious was, as a dutiful miller, how could he have an expert like Tie Chui as his subordinate? A fugitive of Borali Guardian Office no less, an ordinary small bandit wouldn’t have the qualifications to be on that wanted list.

Following what Tie Chui said, Cripple asked another question: “How is that possible? The empire had good weather for the last few years, wheat harvest was abundant, and the black-bearded old man’s business should be even bigger!”

Tie Chui looked up helplessly and sighed. He shook his head and said: “Wrong, wrong, Cripple, the better the weather, the worse the Lord’s business become. Too much flour, it can’t be sold at a good price! The Lord wishes the most for the yearly natural disaster in the empire, there would be famine everywhere, only then could we sell wheat at a high price!”

Pointing his bulky middle finger straight towards the ceiling, Tie Chui bellowed: “Curse the gods, if you still won’t let the empire experience a big drought for several years, these people won’t be able to eat! The boss had stored 20 warehouses of wheat, when can they be disposed of?”

Cripple considered it deeply. He found it make sense and sighed, then hastily ordered the female maids to serve some wine and meat.

RE Chapter 9

Chapter 9 – Spiritual Teacher

Tie Chui had been drinking in Crippled Shop until he was half-drunk. Afterwards he rode a boat by himself following the flow of Seille River, in the direction of Dunerk.

As Cripple held a feast for Tie Chui, Lin Qi more or less recounted several of Tie Chui's glorious past to Enzo. As one of the top ten on Borali Guardian Office's wanted list, there was always a bounty of a thousand gold coins on Tie Chui's head whether he was dead or alive. So over the past few years Tie Chui only moved around Dunerk and its surroundings, rarely coming to Borali.

Just like this time Tie Chui came to Borali, he only dared to appear in the extremely chaotic and dangerous dock area. He absolutely didn't dare to take even half a step outside the dock area. There wasn't just Borali Guardian Office's secret police, there were also those useless Dragon Cavalry, if Tie Chui became the center of their attention, it would definitely be very troublesome.

The letter from Lin Qi's father only urged that he had to go home once during this New Year holidays, nothing else. Tie Chui was Lin Qi's father's right-hand man. To make Tie Chui risk himself when delivering a letter to Borali, this already indicated Lin Qi's father's attitude – this time Lin Qi had to go home, otherwise the consequences would be very serious.

After burning the letter over a candle, the half-drunk Lin Qi gazed out of the tavern and into the evening sky filled with floating snow. He rubbed his hands together as he bid farewell to Cripple. Lin Qi gave off one last hiccup that reeked of alcohol as he walked out. Enzo patted his protruding belly contently while following behind Lin Qi. Cripple, for the sake of welcoming Tie Chui, made the quality of this feast very high. Fine wine, fine food, fine beauties, moreover there was no need to spend money, so Enzo ate as much as he liked. Now he felt that even breathing was a little difficult.

The two people walked along the road in the direction of University City. Only after walking slowly for a long time did Enzo let out a satisfied hiccup and asked:

"Boss, I always find it strange, you haven't gone home for three years, why is that? There is Seine River; it's only a two-day journey through the water from Borali to Dunerk, right?"

Lin Qi withdrew both of his hands into his sleeves, mumbled to himself, rolled his eyeballs, and shot a glance at the bulging purse hanging from the belts of passer-by. Based on the clothing of those people, he calculated how much lovely gold and silver treasures they have in their purse. He didn't answer Enzo's question, only murmured softly: "Tell Wei Ke to bring some people to watch Crippled Shop, take care not to let that group of easterners find out."

Smacking his lips, Lin Qi meaningfully said: "A gold bar was the first thing he took out, such generosity, Enzo, they must be very rich! Uncle Cripple is not an honest man, is he thinking about consuming everything himself?"

Cracking his fingers while producing a 'ka-ka' sound, Enzo's attention was drawn by what Lin Qi said. He no longer thought about why Lin Qi hadn't gone home for three years. He laughed full of enthusiasm and said: "That damned Cripple. Boss, this easy money, we have to think of a way to get it. Oh, that guy called Jiang Yong, chop off his right hand, those several rings are enough for the bothers to enjoy for a very long time!"

Lightly waving his hand, Lin Qi said in a gloomy face: "I know, I know, of course I know this. Tell Wei Ke to keep a tight watch; don't be discovered, our plan is highly risky, it won't be easy to make our move. First discover why they came to Borali, then clearly investigate their origin, after that, oh, if the profit is big enough, I don't mind sharing a bit with my father's men."

Enzo didn't make a single complaint and shouted: "Boss, you said your father 'is just a miller'!"

Glancing impatiently at Enzo, Lin Qi grinded his teeth: "Of course, he is just a miller. But who said a miller can't rob others?"

Enzo silently looked up to the sky. He decided, this University City's New Year holiday, when Lin Qi went home, he must follow Lin Qi to see his house. He was very curious about what Lin Qi's family was like.

When the two people walked into University City area, the feast they just had were more or less digested. Lin Qi sneezed violently. Feeling that his mind

relaxed a lot, he warmly greeted every academy student on the road. Those female students avoided him as if seeing a snake or scorpion while the male students carefully returned the greetings as if meeting a fierce beast. There were only extremely few male students who had the courage to unrestrainedly see him face to face.

Especially the students from the Imperial Affairs Academy who wore skin tight uniforms and swords on their waists, they all didn't care about Lin Qi. However when these valiant imperial officer prospects saw Enzo who was beside Lin Qi, they couldn't help but show an expression of restrained fear.

Lin Qi showed off like this all the way as he moved forward along the main street; although being the center of attention for everyone, yet not many people dared to look at him head on.

"So boring, these good students!" Lin Qi softly and mockingly said to Enzo: "Everyone is shivering like a freezing quail, don't tell me the empire has to rely on these weak people in the future? I see the empire doesn't have any future prospects, the empire's elites don't even dare to face a bad student like me squarely, yet the empire still hopes they could have the courage to devote themselves for its' interests in the future?"

Enzo merely sneered arrogantly. His chin was raised 45 degrees, provocatively looking at those students from the Military Affairs Academy who were walking in formation. His hand was tightly grasping the sword hilt on his waist. There only need to be one student who dared to show a provoking expression against him, then he would propose a duel without the slightest hesitation.

'Crazy Fencer' Enzo, this name was gained in exchange for nearly a hundred seriously injured students from the Military Affairs Academy!

Looking at those students' endless gazes of restrained fear, Enzo couldn't help but grin and laugh. This was his territory; he enjoyed receiving this sort of reverence from people.

These two people, one following the other, walked up to the front gate of the Fifth University. One kilometer to the right was the side door of the Military Affairs Academy. Lin Qi and Enzo split up here. Enzo was going to inform Wei Ke to dispatch people to monitor Crippled Shop while Lin Qi went to deal with some

of his daily tasks.

Just then, a crisp and melodious sound of a little bell could be heard. A priest, wearing an unusual black gown and carrying a copper little bell in his hand, ordered Lin Qi to stay: "Hey, Mister Lin Qi, we haven't met for several days. Your complexion is really not bad!"

Priest Bahrain, a spiritual teacher in Borali Fifth University, the students' spiritual leader, a teacher of the soul, and Lin Qi's close friend. Priest Bahrain wasn't tall, nor was he thin. His fair and clear face was round like a peeled egg. His eyes were twinkling full of a quick-witted and crafty look.

Lin Qi laughed and walked up to Priest Bahrain, took the last 20 copper coins from his purse and gave them to him in exchange for two 'Redemption Talisman' produced by the church.

Recklessly stuffing the Redemption Talisman into his sleeves, Priest Bahrain nodded in satisfaction and laughed: "May God bless you, dear young master Lin Qi. Oh, I just happened to have some good news for you. "

Looking around, Priest Bahrain lowered his voice and muttered: "The new Jisai performing troupe from outside the city, the female lead dancer is not bad. The respected head of administration, Mister Ge Lang, likes her. If you can get Mister Ge Lang to be acquainted with her, Mister Lin Qi's course credit this year won't be an issue."

Lin Qi narrowed his eyes and laughed. He softly patted Priest Bahrain's shoulders and walked with big strides through the school gate.

RE Chapter 10

Chapter 10 – Yu Lian and Penniless

The campus was covered in snow. Several part-time workers and student volunteers were noisily clearing up the thick layer of snow on the road using shovels. Several girls were carrying big bamboo baskets while scattering some salt on the already cleared road. This practice came from the experiences of a study in the five Dalian Islands in the north. Salt could help thawing snow and stopping the ground from freezing.

The sky turned dark very early during winter, it was already a little dark and oil lamps were lighted everywhere. Lin Qi yawned while walking in a corridor through the campus. Every passer-by dodged him, those students who just left the classrooms with books in their embrace, whether male or female, all cautiously kept away from Lin Qi.

The bell tower in the depth of the campus produced the gloomy sound of a bell, signaling that the dining hall had finished preparing dinner. Several European grey-capped greenfinches flapped their wings to flutter down from the top of a big bald tree and miserably hunted for food on the withering lawn which was just recently cleared of snow. Looking at these small birds, Lin Qi softly sighed: “Birds in winter is like Lin Qi with no money to spend, so pitiful!”

Sighing, Lin Qi looked at the towering circular stone pagoda in the distant and couldn’t help but to curl his lips. His eyes flashed with a greedy golden light.

As the empire’s elites, the students of the Fifth University enjoyed excellent accommodation. Lin Qi’s dormitory was built using thick grey marble. The six-floor tall building could accommodate two thousands students. At the four corners of the dormitory were 30-meters tall pointed square tower. At the center of the building was a huge circular dome. On the square tower was an exotic statue of a pair of wings carrying several youths and embedded in a circular multi-colored translucent shell. Its luster was extremely gorgeous and dazzling.

When entering his own room, a core member of the Ironfist Brotherhood, Lin

Qi's subordinate, Yu Lian, was sitting on Lin Qi's bed. His two legs were raised to the bedhead and his hand was holding a sealed letter. He was complacently biting on that small mustache of his, then sneered.

Older than Lin Qi by two years but was on the same year as Lin Qi, Yu Lian was a famous playboy in the Fifth University. Born into a declining household of nobility, Yu Lian had a tall stature. His features were handsome and smart. His meticulously styled short golden hair was very elegant. A small mustache above his upper lip gave off the impression that he was smiling all the time.

Yu Lian had a pair of bright and intelligent azure-colored pupils. His eyes were agile and quick-witted as if continuously shooting amorous glances outward. By relying on his tall and robust figure, his handsome and smart features, his captivating pair of eyes, and his sweet mouth, in addition to his hereditary title of Baron, Yu Lian often appeared in the dreams of numerous University City's female students.

Seeing Yu Lian with that lowly smile and that pink letter in his hand, Lin Qi couldn't help but lamented: "God, did you fool that unlucky woman again? Oh, dear Yu Lian, do you really want one extra romance?"

Passionately kissing the letter in his hand, Yu Lian carefully folded the letter into a rose, then gently put it inside his shirt's pocket. He complacently shook his thigh, looked at Lin Qi smilingly, and extended a hand: "Boss, lend me a crowing, this is a girl living in a small town, she proposed a private and intimate date with me."

Inhaling deeply, Yu Lian shouted loudly using arias brimming with love: "A beautiful date, a shy girl, pure white skin, a soft body. Moonlight, roses, serenades, also fine wine and fragrant and tender calf meat, oh, just with one crowing, I could enjoy such a beautiful night."

Lin Qi sighed softly. He fished out the two Redemption Talisman he bought from Priest Bahrain at the school gate, then placed the two palm-sized coarse paper on Yu Lian's palm. "May God save your soul, you damned Yu Lian! I don't even have one copper coin, do you hear me, not even one copper coin!"

Yu Lian's face stiffened. Strongly patting Yu Lian's slick and glossy head, Lin Qi snorted coldly: "There's a Jisai nomadic performing troupe from outside the

city!"

Yu Lian widened his eyes and showed a strange smile: "Oh, right, a very big-scaled Jisai performing troupe, there are more than three hundred people in total, including 47 pretty young girls. Oh, that Gina, the lead female dancer, her figure is very good, really very good; one of my hands can't even hold her completely! Boss, you know, I had caressed at least three hundred girl's bosom, but not one can compare to her!"

"My god!" Lin Qi had no alternative but to roll his eyes. This Jisai performing troupe just arrived not too long ago. Yu Lian unexpectedly already fooled around with its lead female dancer. Such efficiency, it could only be said that Yu Lian had an outstanding gift of seducing women.

Hooking his fingers, Lin Qi snorted coldly: "Mister Ge Lang wants to invite Gina, that lead female dancer is called Gina right? Mister Ge Lang wants to have dinner with her, if you know what I mean. Give Gina a price, if she's satisfied, bring her to meet Mister Ge Lang. Oh, for Mister Ge Lang, you know, follow the old rules!"

Yu Lian jumped up excitedly, snapped his fingers proudly, and gracefully danced and made two turns in place.

"I knew it, I won't delay my date with that cutie! Oh, a city girl from a rich family, I really longed for that beautiful moment when I strip the clothes from her bosom!" After hugging Lin Qi warmly, Yu Lian strode out in lively dance steps just like moving clouds and flowing water: "Rest assured, boss, your course credit, also the cost of my date, they are settled. Mister Ge Lang is a generous gentleman, I know, he's very generous!"

"Wretched thing!" Lin Qi helplessly looked at Yu Lian's back. He wrinkled his brows and opened his drawer. Sure enough, the last three silver coins he put inside the drawer's hidden frame already disappeared without a trace. In the entire Fifth University, someone who dared to infiltrate Lin Qi's room and stole the last bit of his secret stash, other than Yu Lian there was no one else.

Three lovely silver coins disappeared just like that. Lin Qi who hadn't had dinner only felt stabbing pain in his heart.

"Oh, no! Have to think of a way to earn some money!"

After walking several rounds in his room in distress, Lin Qi gave a long sigh: "Winter, I hate winter, once winter comes, merchants and travelers suddenly decrease by 90 percent, every time during winter, I'm always distressed about money! Damned patrolling Dragon Calvary, damned Guardian Office, why does University City have so many copper hats?"

Once thinking about those secret police wearing copper helmet, Lin Qi felt sadness that was hard to endure.

"I have to earn some money!"

The penniless Lin Qi sighed and helplessly looked through the window towards that tall cylindrical stone pagoda.

"Must earn some money, damn it!"



RE Chapter 11

Chapter 12 – Visiting the Priest at Night

At midnight, Lin Qi left the dormitory.

Silence ruled within the campus. Occasionally, the chirps of birds could be heard as they adjusted to the cold, but the lack of sound from the falling snow created an oppressive pressure on one's ears. Even walking through the snow, not a sound could be heard from Lin Qi's footsteps. He cautiously walked towards the dormitory building of the teaching and administrative staff, avoiding several night patrol guards along the way.

The night and the cold gave Lin Qi the best cover he could ask for. Without alarming anyone, he stole into the hidden and gloomy teacher dormitory building. Passing through a glossy and clean corridor with an easy familiarity, he arrived in front of a door at the end of the corridor. After a quick glance around, Lin Qi slowly picked the lock with an iron wire.

Lin Qi learned this lockpicking technique from Wei Ke. Wei Ke, who was determined to be a thief, had unique gift in these kinds of skills. Lin Qi and his brothers had also learned several skills to protect themselves.

Lin Qi noiselessly pushed open the door and found himself directly facing a big white butt.

As naked as the day he was born, Priest Bahrain was sitting on a round stool, checking the inside of his purse for copper coins while mumbling to himself. A spiritual teacher should be well-groomed and dignified at any time. If Priest Bahrain's superior priests found him like this, he would definitely have to go to the church disciplinary office.

Next to Priest Bahrain's hand was also a huge bottle of wine and a small wine cup. He chuckled softly while meticulously counting 10 copper coins from his purse and putting it inside a small box. After that, he poured himself a cup of wine, raised it, said softly to himself 'God bless', and drained the cup in a single gulp.

Drinking wine in a church was already an enormous sin, yet Priest Bahrain drank contentedly. Blood was already rushing to his fair and plump face, his nose as crimson as a case of blood congestion He cheerfully counted his money, drinking a small cup for every 10 copper coins he counted. He was so happy that he hummed a random folk song while occasionally swinging his plump body. It was certainly a picture to behold, shining white skin and flesh constantly jingling to the rhythm of his song.

“Praise the Lord!” Finally putting the not quite plentiful silver coins and the big heap of copper coins into the small box, Priest Bahrain swung his butts in an unruly way and cheerfully farted. He complacently kneeled on the floor, held both of his hands in front of his chest, and sincerely prayed: “Almighty God, my Father. All you gods in the sky, please gaze upon me with favor and bless this devout Bahrain!”

Sighing emotionally, Priest Bahrain said with incomparable sincerity, “Just today, this devout Bahrain sold another 375 sheets of Redemption Talisman. As such, the church’s funding has increased and the church’s strength has increased. These are all the contributions of this devout Bahrain. Great God, all gods, please bless University City Bishop who will soon die to serve you and let this devout Bahrain replace him!”

Strongly rubbing his red nose, Bahrain sighed sorrowfully, “That greedy lecherous bishop, he is not fit to be God’s servant. He should go to hell along with his several lackeys, then this devout Bahrain will be the best candidate for University City Bishop!”

Crouching deeply and devoutly kissing the floor, the half-drunk Bahrain concluded his evening prayers.

Lin Qi easily closed the door, walked up behind Bahrain, and lightly patted his shoulder.

Bahrain shrieked. Hands and feet flying every which way, he shook from head to foot as he threw himself into the corner of a room and took out a heavy battle-ax from an unremarkable porcelain vase. Not quite noticing who his supposed attacker was, the flustered Bahrain launched a downward chop towards Lin Qi.

"No one can think of snatching even one copper coin from my hands, these are all the church's property!" Eyes reddened just like a starving wolf whose food was snatched away from its mouth, Bahrain pounced towards Lin Qi.

Lin Qi casually raised his right hand, grabbing ahold of the ax handle, and kicked Bahrain with one foot.

"You damned Priest, how can you call yourself a respectable priest and still use an ax to chop at people?" After briefly weighing the Ox Horn Battle-ax in his hand, Lin Qi tossed it onto the couch in disdain. His eyes couldn't help but glance at that small bronze box Bahrain had put on the table.

Exceptionally sensitive towards all matters of money, Bahrain shrewdly perceived the hidden hint of greed inside Lin Qi's eyes. He tensely said, "Mister Lin Qi, if you dare touch even a copper of mine, I swear I won't let you get away with it!"

Knowing Bahrain for three years, Lin Qi was fully aware of what kind of person Priest Bahrain was. He felt a little regret for glancing at that small box. Smacking his lips, he sighed and faked a wronged tone, "Alas, what kind of person do you think I am? We are old friends, old friends, you know! How can you not trust my character like this? This is your money, I wouldn't touch a single coin!"

Rubbing both of his hands energetically, Lin Qi narrowed his eyes and laughed, "That Mister Ge Lang, how much did he give you? O' respectable priest!"

Priest Bahrain eyed Lin Qi vigilantly, then casually pulled a robe and wrapped it around his body. He softly murmured, with extra caution, "Oh, dear Mister Lin Qi, this request is definitely up your alley. Me? I'm just a mediator. Mister Ge Lang gives me a request, I pass his request onto you, and you help him fulfill it. It's that simple, isn't it? Very simple!"

Raising his index finger in front of his mouth and blowing on it, Priest Bahrain warned in a low voice, "As is proper in these cases, I take my profit for services rendered, and you will take yours. We have cooperated in a pleasant manner in these past three years, haven't we?"

Looking at Priest Bahrain's tensed appearance, Lin Qi nodded his head thoughtfully.

Priest Bahrain, despite being this church's scoundrel who didn't deserve his position, had become the spokesperson for a lot of high-leveled people in University City. The nobility, they had all sorts of requests, but their nobility was also what prevented them from interacting directly with those lower middle-class people. So since this freak Priest Bahrain appeared, the nobility of University City area discretely passed certain requests to Priest Bahrain, and in turn Priest Bahrain was responsible for contacting people like Lin Qi, who specialized in solving all kinds of issues.

This type of shameful transaction had its own special rules. Lin Qi indeed shouldn't inquire how much Priest Bahrain received from it.

Helplessly shrugging his shoulders, Lin Qi moved his sight away from that small box with difficulty. He murmured softly, "Fine, fine, lend me a sheet of Protective Talisman, a real one mind you, an effective talisman. Wait until I get the money, I will pay you back double!"

Priest Bahrain rolled his eyes and raised his eyebrow, "Recently, the price of the materials to make a protective talisman has fluctuated, so the price of every sheet of Protective Talisman has been raised to three silver coins!"

Lin Qi angrily glared at Priest Bahrain, "Then, I'll give you six silver coins! Hurry up, give me a sheet of protective talisman right away! A powerful, effective one, a protective talisman that can resist all kinds of attacks. Don't go giving me the kind of stuff used to fool ordinary people!"

Priest Bahrain grinned and swiftly took out a small white scroll from inside his sleeve.

RE Chapter 12

Chapter 12 – Tower of Great Masters

Firmly holding the protective talisman ‘borrowed’ from Priest Bahrain, Lin Qi stood in front of a cylindrical tower located in the deepest part of the campus. His forehead was drenched in a cold sweat.

This tower in front of his eyes, built with dark grey boulders, was the tallest building in the entire empire. Some people called it the ‘Tower of Great Masters’, others called it the ‘Tower of Madmen’. In the Fifth University, there was an official name for this tower – ‘Distinguished Visiting Professor Laboratory’.

Inside the tower were a group of bizarre people from all over the world, with equally bizarre and varied skills. Among them one could find sinister but alluring women and dark elves who studied the dark side of people, damned spirits who liked to periodically take out various creatures’ internal organs, as well as dwarves who liked to play with all kinds of metal and were proficient in forging and weapon manufacturing. What’s more, these dwarves were also experts in the study of ground essences and so on.

Three hundred and seventy meters tall above ground, extending to two hundred and fifty meters underground, and a foundation diameter of fifty eight meters, the tower was built using a special technology derived from the dwarves’ study of ground essences. A single floor was vast enough to accommodate two or three of these reclusive ‘great masters’. The rooms themselves were large enough to allow them to research anything they wanted.

Ever since the establishment of University City, all sorts of bizarre information had been flowing out unceasingly from the inside of this tower, even some technology that had greatly enhanced the empire’s strength. For example, the pointed ends of those six sharp swords that Lin Qi sold to Cripple had used a certain great master dwarf’s special technique of dipping the steel, thereby increasing those swords’ penetrating power.

“Right, I want dazzling crowing!” Lin Qi covered the pit of his stomach with his

right hand and prayed silently toward all the gods in the heavens that he knew of, hoping this time he could safely go in and come out.

In numerous Fifth University students' view, this tower was no different from hell. Every year, there were always dozens of students called to serve the distinguished visiting professors inside the tower who ended up either dead or seriously injured. Even worse, there were several people who went mysteriously missing and had never been heard from again.

Lin Qi was just one of these unlucky people. He had just entered the university through the school gate when he was selected to become the server of a certain distinguished visiting professor. During the last three years, although not a very long time, Lin Qi had already been seriously injured to the brink of death four times and lightly wounded countless times. Therefore, every time he entered the tower, Lin Qi regarded it as a huge risk.

However huge risks equaled huge benefits. There were countless risks inside the tower, but Lin Qi had also found a lot of opportunities to get rich inside. Otherwise it would've been absolutely impossible for him to establish the Ironfist Brotherhood with its several hundred outer members in the short span of three years.

"For the sake of lovely crowings! Dear teacher, by all means you must not go mad!"

Lin Qi nervously gripped the small scroll of protective talisman in his hand. Priest Bahrain, that scum of a cleric, had solemnly vowed to Lin Qi that since this sheet of protective talisman was personally crafted by the great bishop of the great parish in the Seille River area, it had higher defensive abilities. However, Lin Qi thoroughly understood Priest Bahrain's character, if he said that this protective talisman was personally crafted by the bishop of the great parish, then in reality it was most likely crafted by a priest with ordinary spiritual techniques.

As for a protective talisman produced by a priest with ordinary spiritual techniques, its defensive abilities could probably withstand several attacks of an ordinary soldier. Hopefully it would be useful, as long as he wasn't immediately killed by the teacher he was serving, Lin Qi felt that the risks shouldn't be very

big.

Inhaling deeply, Lin Qi cautiously scuttled into the tower.

The eyes of the two bronze sculptures of hyenas in front of the tower emitted scarlet lights. Four rays of red light circled around Lin Qi's body. Lin Qi only felt a burst of heat as if he was soaking in boiling water. Fortunately, a piece of ordinary black iron tablet hanging on his waist flashed and an invisible energy enveloped Lin Qi. The eyes of the hyenas gradually dimmed, and Lin Qi steadily and safely entered the tower.

The first floor of the tower was completely empty. The floor was painted with an ordinary Twelve Astral Circle. A total of ten chunks of red sapphire, each the size of a fist, were shining brightly on the diagram. Several men with cloaks draped over their shoulders were standing in a corner of the hall. Some traces of the armor on their bodies could vaguely be seen through their thick cloak. They were vigilantly looking at Lin Qi. Only after seeing Lin Qi's appearance clearly did they loosen their grip on their sword hilts.

Lowering his head and not daring to make the slightest sound, Lin Qi carefully walked up to a round iron panel at the corner of the hall.

These male guards inside the hall were all high-leveled knights dispatched by the imperial department. Any one of them could effortlessly suppressed Lin Qi's strength. In front of these men, Lin Qi didn't dare show the slightest amount of arrogance and neglect. While with Cripple, Lin Qi could unrestrainedly show off his malice towards Cripple, in front of these vicious and merciless Ironblood Knights trained by the military department, caution and modesty were the first rules to survive.

The military department represented the strength of the imperial squadron that was the grand immense power of the continent. No one dared act wantonly in front of them.

Taking the iron tablet on his waist and putting it on the iron panel next to him, Lin Qi focused his attention to push his limited spiritual power into the iron tablet. Several dull handwritings on the iron tablet slowly shone. The iron panel Lin Qi was standing on slightly flashed, then rapidly descended, following a vertical metal tunnel.

The distinguished professor Lin Qi was about to serve was an eccentric person. He lived on the lowest floor of the underground part of the Tower of Great Masters by himself. Ever since several years ago when his experiment broke down and the leaking toxic gas poisoned everyone on the same floor to death, that floor no longer held any living beings except for him.

Arcanum Great Master Ke Zha was gifted with a high salary and became one of University City's distinguished visiting professors five years ago. However, his temperament was extremely strange. Over the last five years, he never left the deep underground he had been residing in.

The iron panel under Lin Qi's feet slowly came to a stop. There was an arched gateway in front of him. He stuck the iron tablet on the iron gate in front of him and cautiously opened the gate.

The protective talisman in his hand was noiselessly unleashed and a layer of white light enveloped Lin Qi's body.

Lin Qi's mind suddenly relaxed, the protective talisman given by Priest Bahrain this time was unexpectedly the 'Charm of the First Glimmer of Dawn' which borrowed its strength from the God of Dawn. It was also the church's protective talisman with the strongest defensive power. The God of Dawn not only had outstanding defensive power, but also regenerative power that wasn't weak. It was the best type in the records of protective talismans.

With a smile on his face, Lin Qi pushed open the iron gate in front of him. A ball of red flame the size of a fist came whistling to arrive in front of Lin Qi in the blink of an eye. The palpable heat gave testament to its frighteningly high temperature

The ball of fire was extremely condensed, the fearsome temperature instantly dissolved the layer of white light on Lin Qi's body.

"As expected, it was a defective product! Bahrain, you shameful son of a bitch!" Lin Qi gave a miserable howl.

RE Chapter 13

Chapter 13 – Arcanum Great Master

The small ball of fire seared Lin Qi’s head, burning his hair to ashes and causing a greenish black cloud of smoke to rise above the remnants. It wasn’t only the hair on top of his head that burned either, his eyebrows, eyelashes, and even his thin beard were reduced to ashes under the intense heat. The burns on Lin Qi’s body were so bad that hissing sounds could be heard coming from his skin as he miserably howled in pain. It was as though his upper body had been drenched in boiling water.

“Wretched old freak!” Faced with a ball of fire that could kill him in a single strike, Lin Qi desperately pulled out a single-bladed sword that was concealed in his trousers. With sword in hand, he let out a long and courageous battle cry as he chopped into the side of the fireball, sparing no effort to push it aside.

The sword burned bright red upon making contact with the fireball, causing the unpleasant smell of burning flesh to drift out from Lin Qi’s palm. He shrieked miserably and released his grip on the sword’s handle, unable to bear the pain. Despite his best efforts, the ball of fire only deviated a little under 16 centimeters from its intended target, but it was still enough. The fireball whizzed past his cheek, nearly burning it off as it shot past him and crashed into the gate behind.

An array of runes that resembled a rose flickered on the iron gate as it quietly absorbed the formidable power of the ball of fire. .

Lin Qi, who was panting and sweating from head to foot, felt both of his knees go soft. He kneeled on the floor, cursing softly.

The owner of this laboratory and the person Lin Qi was supposed to serve, the empire’s newly hired distinguished visiting professor, arcana great master Ke Zha noiselessly walked up to Lin Qi. A cold dry hand pulled him up, grabbing a scarlet-colored bottled medicine and pouring it on Lin Qi.

Once the medicine with a strong fishy smell entered Lin Qi’s mouth, it became a surging heat wave that rushed into his stomach. His recently depleted energy

was rapidly recovering. His previously burned cheek was also healing at great speed. Lin Qi exhaled heavily, a flattering smile already plastered on his face, then politely bowed at his waist in greeting and salutation: “Respected Great Master Ke Zha, I hadn’t received your call for several days. Is there anything you want me to do here?”

Ke Zha wasn’t tall. He was shorter than Lin Qi by more than half a head. A black gown with big holes all over it was wrapped around his slim body. Its cloth was stained in all kinds of bizarre colors, made by splashes from the various kinds of raw materials that he usually handled. Even Lin Qi did not know what Ke Zha looked like, since a huge scar was covering his face.

It must have been caused by an accident during a certain arcanum experiment, Ke Zha’s entire face being destroyed. A mottled scar ran from his face down to his chest, making his appearance extremely unpleasant. His nose and ears had been fully destroyed by a certain medical juice, leaving only several black holes. Red, white, and black scars alternated, slightly wriggling as he moved. Ke Zha’s every breath carried a hint of a strong medicinal smell.

Conveniently throwing the crystal bottle he had been holding onto a square table next to him, Ke Zha released Lin Qi and gloomily muttered, “Really? Seems like I haven’t seen you in several days. Oh, there are some things that you need to prepare immediately. My laboratory’s food supply has already ended, replenish it for me at once.”

Whilst talking, Ke Zha’s belly made several growling sounds, his face violently twitching several times. It seemed that he hadn’t eaten for several days?!

Lin Qi didn’t dare to make a sound, and hastily nodded his head in response.

Ke Zha’s temperament was extremely and strangely antisocial. Except for Lin Qi, who had been appointed as his servant by the school, he strictly prohibited anyone from coming close to his laboratory. Moreover, Ke Zha was extremely paranoid. There had been times when he had gone mad. Even if Lin Qi was the one who entered the laboratory, it was still possible for him to be attacked.

After four or five janitors in a row had been turned into ashes by Ke Zha’s magic, Ke Zha’s laboratory had turned into the most dangerous restricted area in the Tower of Great Masters. Except for Lin Qi, no one else dared to approach it

recklessly. Therefore, during the several days when Lin Qi had not come by the laboratory, Ke Zha's food supply had ended, and he had not been able to find anyone to replenish it for him. In the end, he could only starve like this.

Lin Qi actually felt a little regret in his heart. These few days he had had too many things on his hands. Those six sharp swords already occupied most of his thoughts and effort. On top of that, some of the brotherhood's outer members had been arrested by the Dragon Cavalry again, and he still had to raise money in order to pay the fine for their bail out. Various things piled up together, he actually forgot about this unlucky but dangerous man, Ke Zha.

If the grand empire's distinguished arcanum great master simply starved to death inside his own laboratory... Thinking about the dreadful consequences, even the extremely daring Lin Qi couldn't help but shrink back.

Reaching into his sleeve, Lin Qi pulled out half a chunk of white bread. Lin Qi had stolen this from the banquet held for Tie Chui, and had been planning to save it for a midnight snack. In the end, it just happened to be useful now.

Once Ke Zha caught sight of this half-chunk of white bread, his eyes immediately turned green. He grabbed the white bread and swallowed it in big mouthfuls. Teeth turned black by the corrosion of some acute liquid poison and rotten like the teeth of a wild dog rapidly grated against each other, making a sound similar to the unpleasant grinding of wheels.

The big chunk of white bread was swallowed by Ke Zha in three bites. After letting out a burp, Ke Zha, fully satisfied, muttered softly: "If you hadn't come... I was so hungry that I wanted to use some liquid medicine to sustain myself. If it had really gotten to that, I guarantee that you would have been roasted into a lump of human fat!"

Ke Zha let out several odd, grim bouts of laughter. Lin Qi only felt a burst of chilliness at the back of his neck. *'No wonder that today, once I entered, I suffered the attack of a fire ball. Was it so that Ke Zha could intentionally speak like this? Fortunately, today I arrived in time. Otherwise, if I only remembered about Ke Zha several days from now, since he said he would refine me into human fat, he absolutely won't turn me into a dried corpse.'*

This queer old freak! What would slaying several unlucky servants mean to

him? Those damned ‘copper hats’ won’t bother at all about a trifling servant and such an old freak.

After eating his fill and burping strongly, Ke Zha twisted his deformed lips and used his extremely hoarse and unpleasant voice to firmly berate Lin Qi. Lin Qi sighed softly and lowered his head, obediently listening to Ke Zha’s berating. Now Lin Qi was broke. He was very broke, and Ke Zha was Lin Qi’s biggest financial backer. So even though Ke Zha had already started cursing that only a pair of dammed wild boars could be as dumb as Lin Qi, Lin Qi still listened obediently to all of it.

After crazily cursing Lin Qi for a full half hour, Ke Zha finally stopped talking, satisfied, and took out a sheet of tough, enduring parchment out of his sleeve.

“This is the list of drug ingredients that I currently need, as well as and their quantities. Hurry up and fetch them for me!”

Gloomily eying Lin Qi, Ke Zha rolled his eyes and coldly snorted: “Tell that group of trash in logistics that the five blades of ‘White Crow Grass’ age they gave me last time was insufficient, and that the concocting technique was also wrong, so it was only due to my powerful and efficient refining energy that I turned them into a powerful aphrodisiac potion. If next time they still dare to make this kind of mistake, I will pour an aphrodisiac potion strong enough to explode a bison’s genitalia on them!”

Lin Qi was so frightened that he quivered once, then joyfully and tightly held that sheet of parchment. His heart was already blossoming with happiness.

Fifteen minutes later, Lin Qi was whistling. With satisfaction, walked out of the Tower of Great Masters while was carrying twelve bottles of ‘Violent Energy Potion’ that were regarded as trash by Ke Zha . The medicinal potion wastes of Ke Zha’s refinements had always been handled by Lin Qi.

Aphrodisiac potion strong enough to explode bison’s genitalia? Lin Qi’s pupils were glittering with distinctive golden rays of light.

RE Chapter 14

Chapter 14 – Timely Help

At the west end of the Fifth University was a grove. Inside, among the numerous trees stood a villa. This was the residence of the university's high level administrative staff and high level professors. It was also the best place with the most peaceful scenery in the entire university. There was even a small lake in the middle of the grove.

Although thick clouds covered the sky, they couldn't block the morning light. As the eastern sky gradually brightened, the university's head of administration, Ge Lang, was already fully dressed and was sitting at the dining table, enjoying a delicious breakfast.

Firewood chopped from an apple tree was burning inside the fireplace while producing a soft *pa-pa* sound. A soothing warmth, and a faint fragrance from the burning logs set people at ease. Unceasing snow could be seen through one of the wide windows. It surely was very cold outside, nevertheless it was as warm as spring inside the room. The intense contrast made Mister Ge Lang happily sigh. He opened up his mouth to drink a mouthful of fresh milk.

The furnishings inside the room were gorgeous. There was a beautiful wallpaper on the wall, with silver furniture inlaid with gold and various kinds of small decorative items everywhere. The entire east wall was covered with precious china from the East. The chairs and bedding were all covered in silk. Everything attested to the richness of the family.

The Fifth University's head of administration, an Imperial Lord, was also born of a lady from a Count's family, Mister Ge Lang, gave out a burp full of satisfaction. Rubbing his slightly balding head, his round crimson face showed a hint of a cheerful smile.

A young and pretty female servant carefully carried a silver tray, delivering the white bread with dried fruits that Mister Ge Lang liked the most. Mister Ge Lang softly laughed; his right hand automatically slipped into the young female servant's skirt and firmly grabbed her young and tender thigh. He recalled this

young female servant's tender and lovely moans under his body last night and the pit of his stomach couldn't help but heat up.

Last night, with several gold coins as the price, he finally made this lovely and young female servant climb into his bed. His own wife hadn't been home these days, so the door was conveniently opened for Mister Ge Lang.

He knew that these few days his own wife was in a relationship with a certain official of Borali. He knew even more what that so-called literature and art salon all about was. However all this was acceptable. She wouldn't mind whose body he 'sweated' on; likewise, he wouldn't complain about under whose body she tenderly moaned.

The young female servant coquettishly let out a sound of protest and glanced at Mister Ge Lang with incomparable charm.

Mister Ge Lang let out a mischievous laughter and felt the pit of his stomach heat up once again. However what made him a little worried was that even though his mind was filled with charming and gentle thoughts, his body, or a certain part of his body to be exact, hadn't had the least bit of reaction. Ice-cold and soft, just like a little Grass Snake in hibernation, it hadn't been moved in the slightest.

Mister Ge Lang, whose interest was quickly waning, pulled his hand back, grabbed the white bread with a little concern, slowly picked out a hazelnut that was inside, and chewed it with a *ka-ka* sound. This kind of omen was not good, indeed, it was very bad. He understood his own body well; this indicated that he couldn't exhibit his 'treasures' in the next few days.

It didn't matter that he couldn't perform during weekdays, but he had just raised that subtle and small request to Priest Bahrain. So naturally, Priest Bahrain should have, according to his request, passed the task on to those 'ruffian' students inside the university who had various methods in their hands.

Without a doubt, in Mister Ge Lang's mind, the kind of students like Lin Qi were 'ruffians' through and through. He didn't have favorable impressions towards those guys who ran amok inside University City. However, he still had to admit one point, an important character like him was also inseparable from the help of these bad students.

Mr. Ge Lang thought about the lead female dancer of that Jisai performing troupe, Gina. According to his many years of experience among ‘flowers’, she should still be a pure girl. She was different from his wife; and also different from his young female servant. His wife who was born of nobility, also these obedient young female servants, were all like pampered and soft pet dogs.

Glancing sideways to look at the small golden Dachshund lying in front of the fireplace and snoring away, Mister Ge Lang couldn’t help but shrug.

Gina wasn’t like them; she was a wildcat, full of unruliness, a strong and healthy young leopard. The youthful fragrance all over her body, her vigorous movements, everything deeply infatuated Mister Ge Lang. Whatever the price, he had to spend one joyous evening with this beautiful girl. Picturing the scene of her beautiful and youthful body struggling and twisting under his own, Mister Ge Lang’s heart suddenly violently throbbed.

But damn it, a certain significant part of his body still hadn’t had the least bit reaction.

“The hell with it!” Thinking about the completely hot and wild Gina, Mister Ge Lang started to regret last night’s self-indulgence.

His own young female servant, he could enjoy anytime, even if his wife was at home, there was no harm doing it. But the girl from the Jisai performing troupe, that kind of high quality good was extremely rare. Regardless of their looks, figures, or skin, they had a totally different and wild temperament to them that was different from ordinary women. The attraction power that Gina had over Mister Ge Lang was indeed too strong.

To have given Gina up for the sake of one young female servant? This was simply a disaster.

However he was most clear about his own body, he couldn’t show his ‘treasures’ again for several days, yet the Jisai performing troupe never stopped at one place longer than three days! With a gloomy face, Mister Ge Lang rose to leave; the delicious breakfast was incapable of attracting his attention anymore. Sighing in despair, he grabbed the triangle hat inlaid with gold on the dining table and wore it on his head. After grabbing the small cane made of Old Mountain Vine, he walked out of the room with a drooping head.

Cold wind blowing on his body, Mister Ge Lang shivered. A hint of demonic fire in his heart was incapable of giving vent to his indignant roars. These wretched lazy servants, this noble Lord Ge Lang wanted to leave, yet they unexpectedly still hadn't prepared a proper carriage?

While yawning unceasingly, Lin Qi entered Mister Ge Lang's courtyard and waved towards the latter while smiling.

Mister Ge Lang was incomparably tired of seeing Lin Qi; it was like eating a housefly first thing in the morning. He admitted that rogue students like Lin Qi were very useful, but it didn't mean that he could put up with a scoundrel like Lin Qi freely coming and going in his own courtyard. With a gloomy face, he waved the small cane which produced *hu-hu* sounds of the wind and sent out a roar full of deterrence: "Lin Qi, you wretched guy, is this a place you can casually come to?"

No matter what, this was the family residence of a Lord and Lady from a Count, how could a scoundrel like Lin Qi casually enter the residence of nobility?

Lin Qi held out a crystal medicine bottle the size of only a thumb in his hand. He contentedly laughed towards Mister Ge Lang: "Dear Mister Ge Lang, I came to deliver you some good stuff! I think you ought to want this precious thing, a miraculous medicine refined from mysterious medicinal herbs from the east!"

Lin Qi subtly shot a glance at Mister Ge Lang's lower body. Lin Qi had numerous eyes and ears in University City. Mister Ge Lang's carriage driver was an outer member of the Ironfist Brotherhood. He was fully aware of what shameful ailment Mister Ge Lang had.

This bottle of Violent Potion would absolutely fetch a huge sum of money from Mister Ge Lang.

RE Chapter 15

Chapter 15 – Generous Ge Lang

The sensitive Mister Ge Lang finally noticed Lin Qi's subtle gaze. He straightened his body, intentionally sticking his lower abdomen out. Using this kind of obscure body movement, Mister Ge Lang was warning Lin Qi, '*The things that you suspect don't actually exist, this respectable Lord Ge Lang is still as strong and vigorous as ever.*'

However, Mister Ge Lang's gaze couldn't help but flick towards the small crystal medicine bottle on Lin Qi's palm. He knew who the distinguished visiting professor Lin Qi served was: Arcanum Great Master Ke Zha. He was a Great Master character whom the empire had paid an enormous price to attract. Great Master Ke Zha was most well-known for a single event. Ten years ago, in a royal hunting ground of a certain nation in the West Continent, he used a dose of life-saving medicine to save a certain king whose internal organs had suffered serious damage from a magical beast.

Ten years later, that king, whose liver was torn to pieces was still alive, still vigorously towering over his kingdom's affairs.

If he possessed this kind of miraculous method, maybe this small medicine bottle on Lin Qi's hand really came from the mystical Mister Ke Zha? Miraculous medicine refined from mysterious Eastern medicinal herbs? It sounded extremely attractive.

Using the bright and clean head of the small Mountain Vine cane that was inlaid in silver to rub his nose, Mister Ge Lang didn't comment and let out several grim laughs, "Great Master Ke Zha is a great person who deserves respect. Lin Qi, you won't use fake drugs to ruin the great master's reputation, right?"

Lin Qi looked at Mister Ge Lang in astonishment. He shrugged his shoulders and laughed strangely, "Did I say that this was a medicine refined by Great Master Ke Zha?"

Ge Lang didn't comment, but instead let out several grim laughs, and lightly shook his head. He thought he saw through Lin Qi's small trick; this kind of

medicine was certainly produced by Great Master Ke Zha. This scoundrel Lin Qi, with all his connections and relationships in Borali city, which good medicine could he get? The only place he could get medicine from was Ke Zha's laboratory.

Lin Qi also didn't utter a word. He walked up to Ge Lang, took out a small chunk of black bread from inside his sleeve, then opened the medicine bottle, letting a drop of thick light pink colored medicine drip on the bread. After waiting for the medicine to be fully absorbed by the bread, Lin Qi whistled and threw the black bread into the house. It fell precisely in front of that snoring golden Dachshund which was lying in front of the fireplace.

The 33 cm long Dachshund slowly lifted its eyelid. It looked at the black bread in front of it, and carefully sniffed. After hesitating a while, it opened its mouth and swallowed that piece of black bread. Ge Lang waved his cane disapprovingly. Black bread? His wife's favourite small Dachshund always ate porridge and white bread; when had it eaten low quality food like black bread?

"A scoundrel student was still a scoundrel student!" Ge Lang twisted his mouth. He looked at Lin Qi, a little fed up, "However, University City needs these kind of student."

Ge Lang was well aware that he had quite a few things that could only be accomplished through Lin Qi, including tailing his wife's carriage, and discovering the identity of the official who his wife had recently fooled around with. These things were all accomplished thanks to Lin Qi's help. Of course, these things were all done through Priest Bahrain, the mediator of these two people who had never had direct contact.

This was the first time Lin Qi and Mister Ge Lang had interacted face to face. Mister Ge Lang was filled with disdain towards Lin Qi, but at the same time, he was also filled with restrained fear of the hidden meaning in Lin Qi's words.

When Mister Ge Lang wrinkled his brows pondering over this messy problem for several breaths, that small Dachshund which had smooth and glossy fur suddenly violently trembled. Its originally purple-greenish pupils suddenly turned bloodshot. It produced a deep snarl, its golden fur standing on end and making its long and delicate body look particularly thick and solid.

What became thick and solid wasn't merely this pitiful puppy's body, a certain part of its body was swelling at a rate that caused people to be astonished.

It was winter, furthermore it was not a cat's, dog's, or that kind of animal's mating season anymore. Their nature was to start to preserve their strength for the coming year. However, this small puppy, after eating that piece of black bread, had already become incomparably vigorous. It was roughly panting, its sluggish and bloodshot eyes were fixed on the soft cushion Mister Ge Lang had just sat on, before pouncing on it while wailing.

Jumping on the seat like a tiger, the small Dachshund bent the corner of its mouth. Wearing a trace of a weird snarl, its four limbs hugged that soft cushion made of silk from the East and long velvet cotton from the Middle East, then violently started moving its body up and down.

Mister Ge Lang's mouth hung open. He also had once used some strange medicine during certain moments when he felt weak, but he couldn't remember a medicine that was as amazingly efficient as this. In nothing more than the short span of several breaths, this small Dachshund had unexpectedly transformed to have so much vigor, giving birth to such formidable urges?

Mister Ge Lang's heart violently throbbed as he felt a burst of heat in his lower abdomen, and the lovely and charming appearance of that Jisai performing troupe's lead dancer, Miss Gina, suddenly flashed before his eyes. A youthful and vigorous body, a beautiful body that was as sinuous as a female leopard.

"Oh, so it's this kind of miraculous medicine!" Ge Lang hid his hands behind his back to lowered his voice, "Alright, Student Lin Qi, this bottle of medicine, how much do you think is its value?"

A *puchi* sound was heard, that small Dachshunk already punctured a hole on the soft cushion, and white cotton flew about.

The corner of Mister Ge Lang's mouth lifted, his interest towards this medicine became even more intense. So potent, bold, and powerful, he suddenly recalled his youthful years.

"One bottle?" Lin Qi looked at Mister Ge Lang in astonishment: "Are you joking? One bottle? No, no, no, this kind of miraculous medicine is difficult to make, its materials are extremely rare. In the mysterious East, only their king and

nobility are qualified to enjoy it, how can this medicine be sold per bottle?"

Wearing a sly smile, Lin Qi laughed towards an endlessly stunned Mister Ge Lang, "One drop for one gold coin, dear Mister Ge Lang, this kind of miraculous medicine is sold in drops. You see, here is an actual example, your family's lovely pet, look how abundant its vigor is now?"

The pitiful small Dachshund had already torn the soft cushion to pieces. It impatiently jumped on the sofa at the corner of the room, hugged a new cushion and violently shook. Mister Ge Lang looked entranced at that shattered soft cushion, thoughtfully using the cane to rub his chin lightly: "One drop for one gold coin, it should be a fair price, I must admit this one point, this kind of miraculous medicine, it's worth this price!"

Sticking out his chest, Mister Ge Lang earnestly said: "This bottle of medicine roughly has a hundred drops right? Student Lin Qi, if you are willing to trade it for thirty gold coins, then the evaluations for you and your friends will be exceptional for all subjects!"

All subjects will be exceptional?

Thinking about those core members of the Ironfist Brotherhood whose grades were always on the passing line, Lin Qi immediately stuffed the medicine bottle into Mister Ge Lang's hand.

"Generous Mister Ge Lang, its yours!"

RE Chapter 16

Chapter 16 – Terrifying Easterner

Snow fell unceasingly, already forming a thick layer on the surface of the roof and the ground.

The northern region of Borali City was a dock area where crooks mixed in with honest folks. It was Borali City's most chaotic, most barbaric, most violent, and most dangerous area. In contrast, the southern region of Borali City was a long-established old business district. From silk and tea leaves from the East, tobacco and jewels from overseas, dwarves' weapons, and elves' works of art; every kind of fantastic thing could all be found here.

Different from the barbaric sights in the dock area, the northern region's business district was flooded with the smell of deceit and treachery. In the dock area there was no shortage of men who dared to sacrifice themselves for the sake of their brothers, or men who pierced a knife into the rib of their own family members. Those who roamed around the business district, however, were various kinds of kidnappers, swindlers, thieves, and so on.

Part-time workers dispatched by the city hall and servants of the shops in business district were already up at dawn, working together to sweep the previous night's snow away. Wei Ke, who was wearing black clothes, was sitting on the roof of a tall building, hiding behind three thick chimneys while squinting his eyes to observe a street far away.

According to Lin Qi's request, Wei Ke already gathered manpower to monitor Crippled Shop, intending to discover the traces of Jiang Yong and his party of Easterners. Just recently, when Wei Ke was having breakfast, news arrived that Jiang Yong had appeared at business district alone. Moreover he was inside a silk shop inquiring about the price of various kinds of silk and satin.

By lucky coincidence, Wei Ke could see that old silk shop called 'Hunchback Shop,' which had hundred years of history and was located at the end of the street, from his position. The front of that shop was enormous, no less than ten times the size of other shops nearby; inside, silk from the East and various kinds

of precious cloths were spread all over.

The business district's Hunchback Shop and dock area's Crippled Shop were equally famous, each one a major player in Borali City's underworld. They had more than a thousand thugs and rogues under their control who were ready to be dispatched at anytime. The two competed with each other, yet also cooperated with each other, they undermined each other, yet also dealt with the onslaught of external enemies together, forming a kind of queer symbiosis relationship.

For instance, let's say Crippled Shop purchased some goods from pirates at a low price, including silk, tea leaves, and other Eastern goods; they would be sold to Hunchback Shop. Hunchback Shop would also strictly adhere to the 'dark' rules, they would never seize the goods directly from the pirates. They both cautiously looked after their respective territory. One side's subordinates would never rashly set foot on the other side's territory, but at the same time when Guardian Office or an external faction targeted what they were working on, they would immediately join hands.

Cripple and Hunchback, these are two major businessmen in Borali City's underworld, both already handed down legacies of several hundred years.

Wei Ke had eyesight good enough to inspire envy in people . His talent, which was reliable in the dark, was even more formidable during the day; His line of sight could reach many times farther than an ordinary person. What's more, his field of view could cover a nearly 180 degrees area. All of this which made Wei Ke capable of becoming the best robber, were exceptionally good innate skills of the best assassin.

The distance from here to the Hunchback Shop was more than 300 meters, but Wei Ke could clearly see everything that was happening inside the shop.

With a black cloak wrapping around his body and barely exposing his face, Jiang Yong was inside the Hunchback Shop inquiring about the prices of various kinds of silk and satin. He would occasionally stroke the smooth and precious cloths, his face wearing a hint of a strange sneer.

Wei Ke couldn't make sense what this strange Easterner was doing in Hunchback Shop. He came from the East, the clothes on his body were all woven

from brocade of the best quality, how could he have any interest towards the Hunchback Shop's silk? Was it possible that he was doing market research?

Just like Lin Qi, as Wei Ke was also a student of the Fifth University's finance and accounting major, he could only use market research to describe Jiang Yong's behavior. Maybe this Easterner was investigating the profit of a bolt of silk after being transported from the East to the West?

Squinting his eyes to look at Jiang Yong, Wei Ke swept his gaze over two petite men with ragged clothing in front of Hunchback Shop.

Those two people weren't from the Ironfist Brotherhood, rather they were hired from the business district's local tyrant; local ruffians who would do anything for you as long as you spent some money. Here was Hunchback's territory, Wei Ke didn't want to use his own manpower to monitor Jiang Yong, he only paid ten copper coins to make these two thugs watch Jiang Yong attentively.

These two thugs didn't use much of their heads, the main force in tailing Jiang Yong was Wei Ke himself. These two rascals were merely a piece of bait Wei Ke threw out to probe Jiang Yong, hoping they could arouse his attention. Then Wei Ke could guess Jiang Yong's true strength through his reaction.

Wei Ke knew the disposition of these local ruffians; needless to say even if he hadn't paid them ten copper coins to monitor Jiang Yong, if they themselves came across a 'big fat sheep' like Jiang Yong, they absolutely wouldn't let him go . He was looking for something to happen later on, in the end, was Jiang Yong a ferocious beast covered in sheepskin, or a genuine 'big fat sheep'?

Jiang Yong spent almost an hour in Hunchback Shop, on the roof Wei Ke's hands and feet were freezing cold. With great difficulty, he noticed Jiang Yong leaving Hunchback Shop, with both of his hands behind his back, he leisurely walked allong an alley.

Possessing innate abnormal eyesight, Wei Ke observed Jiang Yong's each and every movement.

Those two thugs didn't let Wei Ke down, they caught up with Jiang Yong while shivering, following him into a small and remote alley. Then Wei Ke's opportunity arrived , the two rascals looked at each other, pulled out a dagger and sneakily

stabbed towards Jiang Yong.

Separated by a distance of more than 300 meters, Wei Ke saw the two thugs who had complacent smiles on their faces constantly closing in on Jiang Yong. That small alley was deserted, a good place for killing people and plundering money. If the strength that Jiang Yong displayed wasn't powerful enough, Wei Ke didn't mind helping the thugs by shooting an arrow at him.

Letting out an odd laughter, Wei Ke was just about to move stealthily and join in when he abruptly trembled from head to foot, as if a bucket of ice water was poured on down from the top of his head. He had goosebumps all over his body, he was so scared that his hands and feet which had turned ice-cold, no longer dared to budge.

Several meters away, Jiang Yong, who was in the middle of the small alley, let out a grim laughter. His whole body was enveloped in a layer of faint purple light as he fell backwards like a mad horse, both of his elbows ruthlessly knocking against the pit of the two thugs' stomachs.

The two thugs didn't even have time to scream; their bodies immediately exploded, turning into countless extremely small pieces of flesh that scattered around. After scattering, their flesh rapidly formed into ice, becoming white drizzling frost that sprayed a wide area behind them.

Jiang Yong sneered in ridicule. He softly dusted off his hands, then continued walking with both of his hands behind his back as if nothing had happened.

Wei Ke's forehead was already drenched in cold sweat. He was so scared that his whole body went soft as he pathetically sat behind a chimney.

"Damn it, this Easterner, he was a Heaven Knight!"

RE Chapter 17

Chapter 17 – Unfortunate Capture

Heaven Knight! Wei Ke thought he was going mad.

He and Lin Qi had mistakenly judged Jiang Yong to simply be a high-leveled knight, but never in his dreams would he have expected Jiang Yong to possess Heaven level strength.

A fully grown man possessing a sturdy body, couldn't be called a knight. Only by arousing one's potential, could fighters who possessed 'qi', acquire the title of a knight. Prior to the Rebirth Calendar, this saying had spread since the ancient Dark Age and Destruction Age.

In the West, this kind of energy was called 'battle qi' or 'douqi'; in the East, this kind of energy was called 'inner qi' or 'vital energy'. Although the name differed, the essence was the same. After tempering one's body to the limit, one must extract a kind of internal and external power that could arouse a living thing's potential.

White, red, orange, yellow, green, azure, blue, purple, violet, and gold: these nine colors represented Man, Earth, or Heaven. Any of these three ranks of a knight possessed distinct douqi colors. These nine colors, which mankind could observe from nature, corresponded with one another, and were nicknamed the Nine Colored Borders of Heaven.

Those who possessed white, red, or orange, these three douqi color were Man Knights. Yellow, green, or azure, these three douqi colors were indicative of an Earth Knight. Blue, purple, or violet gold, these three douqi colors were the characteristics of a Heaven Knight. Those ordinarily called high-leveled knights were merely at the level of Orange Man Knight or Yellow Earth Knight. Azure Earth Knight was already an extremely rarely seen expert, yet Jiang Yong was a Purple Heaven Knight.

A Man Knight could effortlessly defeat an enemy that was ten times stronger. Earth Knights could match a hundred or even a thousand men on the battlefield. For Heaven Knights, unless there was another knight of the same stage or

someone ‘mighty’ against them, the number of people in front of them didn’t have any significance .

The pitiful Wei Ke just broke through from pinkish white to pure white stage one year ago and possessed the peak strength of an early stage Man Knight. After trying hard for another two years, maybe he could reach the middle stage of Man Knights, possessing red douqi . The strongest in the entire Ironfist Brotherhood was Enzo, who possessed deep red douqi, as well as Lin Qi, the leader of the brotherhood, whom people couldn’t see through.

Such weak strength, unexpectedly wanted to scheme against a Heaven Knight possessing purple douqi, it was equivalent to suicide!

Without even mentioning Jiang Yong , he still had dozens of companions beside him. If those companions of his all had the strength of Heaven Knight... No, there was no need for them all to have the power of a Heaven Knight; so long as they all had the strength of high-leveled Earth Knight, they could wipe out the entire Borali ‘dark world’..

Apart from an imperial department which had large quantities of elite knights, as well as the Church which had an incomparably huge hidden power, the West Continent didn’t have one place that could handle a Heaven Knight.

“Damn you Boss, why did you choose such a wretched target?”

While grumbling about Lin Qi’s judgment, Wei Ke slide down a peripheral chimney to the ground, leaving through a small alley. He wanted to immediately return to the Fifth University to announce this frightening news to Lin Qi. The ‘fat sheep’ they took fancy to wasn’t a ‘fat sheep’ at all, rather it was a magical beast that could kill all of them anytime.

“Frightening, really too frightening!”

Wei Ke was still incessantly shaking in fear from what he just witnessed; two real people were unexpectedly shattered to pieces in one attack by Jiang Yong. The Ironfist Brotherhood had also taken part in quite a few large scale fights previously. Wei Ke had also personally seriously injured some people, even took the lives of some enemies with his arrows; but he never witnessed such a bloody scene, such a cruel scene.

Two living adults were unexpectedly turned into countless scattering snowflakes in one strike.

That Jiang Yong was too fierce, too sinister, and too ruthless. Viciously acting with disregard for common sense and effortlessly taking two lives like that. Once he thought about that scene of flesh and blood flying, Wei Ke couldn't help but tremble all over.

"The question is , what is their origin? This group of Easterners is simply a bunch of demons!" Wei Ke wrinkled his brows, recalling the information bribed from Lisa, that female maid from Crippled Shop. "That Jiang Yong's under part is completely empty? Don't tell me he is a woman? But how come he doesn't look like a woman? Furthermore how can a woman have such ruthless and cruel methods?"

Focused on guessing Jiang Yong's origins, Wei Ke ignored his surroundings.

On the alley he was walking up after sliding down the chimney, dozens of burly men were ganging up and beating a haggard youth. Wearing flashy clothes, a showy youth with a sword hanging from his waist was standing on the small alley, looking at the beaten up youth with a smile on his face.

When Wei Ke landed, the snow covered ground produce a dull noise, causing that showy youth to turn his head in astonishment, looking right at Wei Ke who was dozens of meters away. Seeing Wei Ke's deathly pale complexion and scared manner, the showy youth blanched. Soon after he shouted with incomparable excitement: "Hey, Wei Ke, you son of a bitch, you filthy rat, today you will fall by my hands!"

Wei Ke blanched, then abruptly turned his head to take a glance and caught sight of the showy youth and the dozens of burly men next to him. Wei Ke couldn't help but stare blankly. Soon after he dove into another alley. Wei Ke cursed himself in his mind, he was constantly vigilant and never erred. Today however, because he had been distracted by Jiang Yong's ruthless acts, he unexpectedly fell into this difficult situation.

He recognized the showy youth as Charlie Rabbit; he was a student in the Imperial Army Academy. Older than people like Lin Qi and Wei Ke by one year in the academy, he was at 4th year student in the Imperial Army Academy. The

reason why he had the nickname ‘rabbit’ was because he was extremely cowardly. In several fights with the Ironfist Brotherhood, he would promptly escape once he fell into a disadvantageous position, therefore Lin Qi gave him the name ‘rabbit’.

Charlie Rabbit was, like most of the students of the Army Academy, members of the ‘Knights of the Round Table,’ the Ironfist Brotherhood’s arch-enemy. Both sides consisted of bad students who , for the sake of plundering the University City territory, certain good-looking female students and rivals, and other various kinds of crazy reasons, had broken into ten large and small fights for the past three years.

The Knights of the Round Table were all students of the Army Academy and thus had an advantage in military skills and individual strength. However, because the Ironfist Brotherhood had Lin Qi as its leader, the Knights of the Round Table suffered defeat ninety percent of the time in the fights, and had suffered quite a bit.

Now that Wei Ke was alone with no one to accompany him, how could Charlie Rabbit let him get away?

A white light enveloped Wei Ke’s body and he spared no effort to flee towards the exit of the alley.

However Charlie Rabbit’s body produced faint pink light as he chased after Wei Ke with a speed that was a hint faster than the latter.

Wei Ke had just ran for several steps when Charlie Rabbit arrived behind him. He tilted a big wooden club and ruthlessly swung it down, heavily smashing on Wei Ke’s knee. Wei Ke let out a painful cry and was flipped over on the ground by the smash from the club. Charlie Rabbit immediately pounced on Wei Ke’s body.

“Hey, son of a bitch, finally caught you!” Charlie hit the back of Wei Ke’s head with a fist, making him lose consciousness.
